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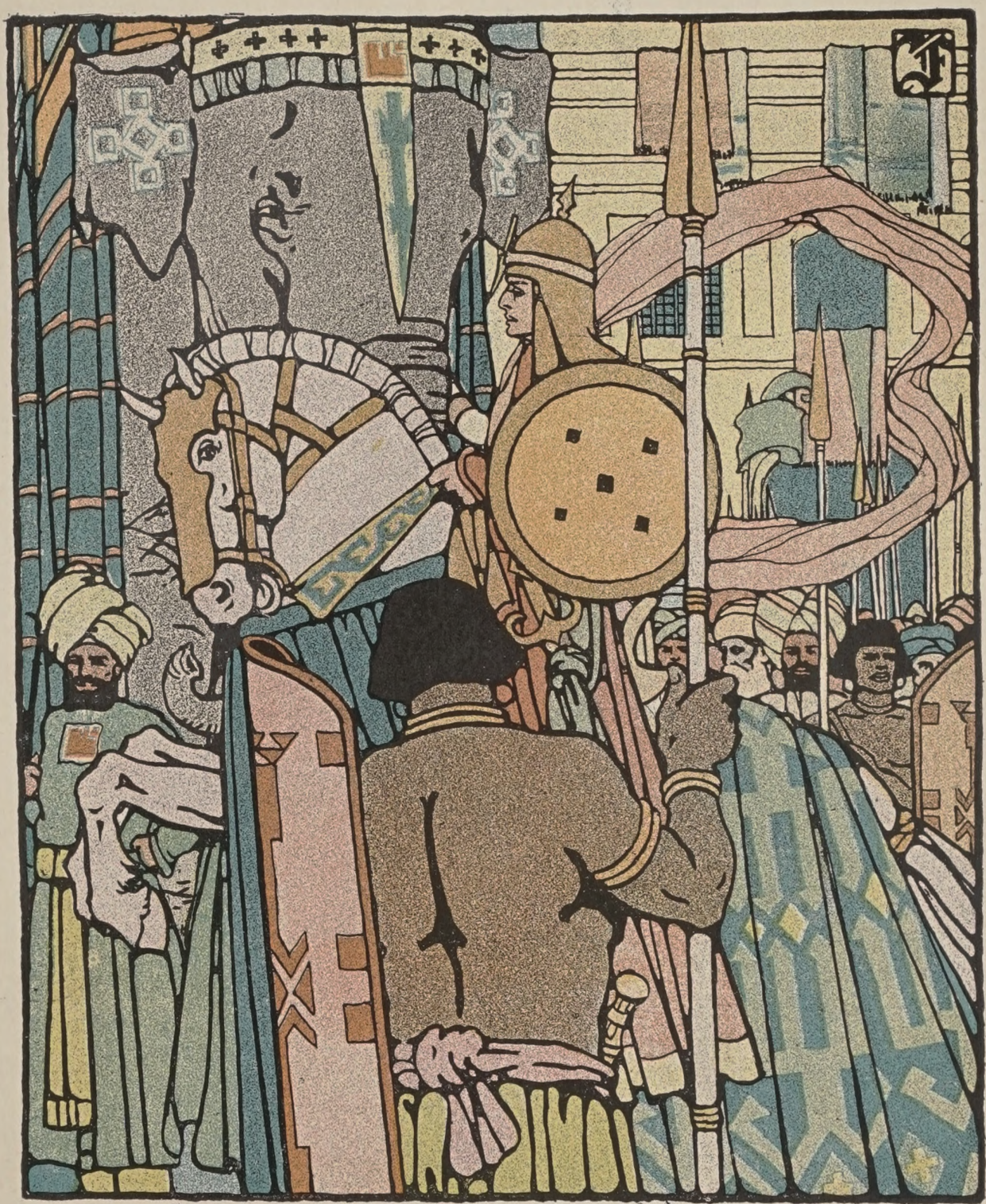

Prince Ahmed visits his father

The Wild Flower Fairy Book

Esther Singleton

Decorated and Illustrated
by Charles Burkles Falls

Dodd Mead and Company
New York 1905

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Contents

	PAGE
The Hind in the Wood (*French*)	1
Madam Holle (*German*)	45
The Sun Lady—(SURYA BAI) (*Hindu*)	51
Tom Thumb (*English*)	70
Prince Ahmed and the Fairy Pari Banou (*Arabian*)	76
The Silly Jelly-Fish (*Japanese*)	115
The Sleeping Beauty (*French*)	120
The Little Mermaid (*Danish*)	129
The Three Brother Beasts (*Italian*)	166
The Brave Tin Soldier (*Danish*)	177
The Boy Who Wanted to Marry (*Norwegian*)	184
The Deer of the Five Colours (*Hindu*)	194
Fair Goldilocks (*French*)	198
The Doll in the Grass (*Norwegian*)	219
Rumpelstiltskin (*German*)	222

	PAGE
Little Ida's Flowers (*Danish*)	227
The Peonies (*Chinese*)	240
Child Rowland (*English*)	268
The Jackal, the Barber and the Brahmin (*Hindu*)	273
The Three Little Men in the Wood (*German*)	294
Urashima, The Fisher-Boy (*Japanese*)	304
The Travelling Companion (*Norwegian*)	309
The Pinks (*French*)	330
The Princess in Disguise (*German*)	345

List of Illustrations

Prince Ahmed Visits His Father	*Frontispiece*	
Desiree	*Facing page*	26
"She Shook the Tree till the Fruit Fell"		46
"He Kissed its Leaves"		60
Tom Thumb and the Giant		74
The Peasant Tells of the Castle		126
The Little Mermaid Watches ye Prince		138
"With a Terrible-Looking Dragon at Her Feet"		172
Avenant Beholds the Grotto		214
"She Began to Weep Bitterly"		224
Merlin		270
"The Jackal Took Her to His Den"		282
One of the Little Men Asks for Bread		298
"Urashima Went to Sleep in His Boat"		306
The Companion Shows Him the Castle		316
The Princess in the Forest		348

The Wild Flower Fairy Book

THE HIND IN THE WOOD

ONCE upon a time there were a King and a Queen who were perfectly happy. They loved each other dearly and were adored by their subjects; but everyone regretted that there was no heir. One day when the Queen was sitting by a spring she began her usual complaints: "How unhappy I am," she said, "to have no children! The poorest women have plenty of them: am I to die without knowing the delights of being a mother?" She noticed that while she was speaking, the water of the spring became agitated. A big lobster appeared and said: "Great Queen, you shall have your desire. Not far from here is a magnificent palace, built by fairies,

but it is very difficult to find, because it is surrounded by clouds too thick for mortal eye to pierce. However, I am your very humble servant and if you will entrust yourself to a poor lobster, I will take you there."

The Queen listened without interrupting. She was surprised at the novelty of a talking lobster and accepted the offer. The lobster smiled and immediately assumed the form of a handsome old woman. "Well, madam," she said, "look upon me as one of your friends, for I only wish your happiness."

She came out of the water perfectly dry. Her gown was white, lined with crimson, and her grey hair was tied up with green ribbons. A more elegant old lady was never seen; she saluted the Queen, who embraced her, and without further delay the old lady led the Queen down a path she had never seen before. How could she? It was the fairies' road to the spring and usually shut in by briers and thorns. But when the Queen and her guide appeared, the briers brought forth roses and the orange trees twined their branches to form an arcade of leaves and flowers, the ground was covered with violets and a thousand different birds sang enchantingly in the trees.

Before the Queen had recovered from her astonishment, her eyes were dazzled by the brilliance of a

palace built entirely of diamonds; the walls, roofs, ceilings, floors, staircases, balconies, even the terraces, were all of diamonds. She could not help giving a loud cry of admiration, and asked her companion if what she saw was a phantom or a reality. "Nothing could be more real, madam," she replied. The palace gates opened and six fairies came forth, but what fairies! they were the most beautiful and magnificent ever seen. They courtesied low to the Queen, and each presented her with a flower of precious stones to form a bouquet; there was a rose, a tulip, an anemone, a columbine, a pink and a pomegranate. "Madam," they said, "we cannot give you a greater mark of our respect than allowing you to visit us here, and we are very glad to announce that you will become the mother of a beautiful Princess. You are to name her Desirée, for it cannot be denied you have long desired her; do not fail to summon us as soon as she is born, for we want to endow her with all sorts of good qualities. To bring us to you, you have merely to take the bouquet we have given you and name each flower aloud, thinking of us all the while." The Queen, overjoyed, threw her arms about their necks and embraced them. They then invited her to enter the palace, of which it is impossible to give any adequate description. The Queen remained in the palace till evening and then

departed with the fairy of the spring, who left her near her home.

According to promise, a Princess was born to the Queen, and was called Desirée. The Queen took the bouquet, named the flowers one after the other, and immediately the fairies arrived. Each had a chariot of a different sort: one was of ebony drawn by white pigeons, another of ivory drawn by ravens, another of cedar and calambour.

They entered the Queen's room gaily and majestically, accompanied by dwarfs bearing presents. The fairies took the little Princess, dressed her with their own hands, and gave her more than a hundred kisses, for she was already so beautiful that to see her was to love her. One gave her virtue; another, intelligence; a third, miraculous beauty; the fourth, good fortune; the fifth, health and long life; and the last, success in all that she undertook.

The Queen, delighted beyond measure, was thanking the fairies a thousand times, when a lobster so big that it could hardly get through the doorway, entered the room. "Ungrateful Queen," she exclaimed, "you have forgotten me. Do you not remember the fairy of the spring and my kindness in taking you to my sisters? You summoned them and forgot me."

The Queen asked to be forgiven. She said she

thought she had named her flower with the rest and entreated her not to withdraw her friendship, and particularly not to remove her favour from the Princess. The fairies, fearing she should bestow misery and evil fortune on the Princess, joined with the Queen in attempting to lessen her anger. "Dear sister," they said, "we entreat your highness not to be angry with a Queen who never intended to displease you; throw off your lobster disguise and let us see you in all your beauty."

The fairy of the spring was something of a coquette, and her sisters' praises somewhat mollified her. "Well," she said, "I will not bring on Desirée all the evil I intended, for I certainly meant to do her harm; but I warn you that if she sees daylight before her fifteenth birthday, she will repent it and perhaps lose her life."

Neither the Queen's tears nor the fairies' entreaties could change the sentence. She withdrew, walking backwards, for she would not lay aside her lobster disguise.

Directly she had gone, the sad Queen asked the fairies to advise her how she could best save her daughter from the threatened evils. After much discussion, they decided it would be best to build a palace without doors or windows, to make a subterranean passage leading into it, and let the Princess

live there until the fatal age at which misfortune threatened was past.

The building was begun and finished by three strokes of the wand. It was of white and green marble, the ceilings and floors were of diamonds and emeralds that formed flowers, birds and many pretty things. The hangings and carpets were of coloured velvet, embroidered by the fairies themselves.

Wax candles furnished light, and there were so many of them that the daylight was scarcely missed. Tutors were employed to instruct the Princess; and her intelligence, vivacity and skill were so great that she nearly always divined what they had to teach. Her beauty equalled her intelligence. The good fairies visited the Princess occasionally, and brought her precious gifts; but of all the fairies Tulip loved her best, and anxiously warned the Queen not to let her see daylight before she was fifteen. "Our sister of the spring is revengeful," she said; "whatever care we take of this child, she will harm her if she can; so, Madam, it is impossible to be too vigilant."

The Queen promised to be on her guard, but as the time when her beloved daughter might safely leave the castle drew near, she had her portrait painted and taken to all the great courts of the world. One of the Princes was so struck by it that he refused to part

with it, and talked to it in the most passionate manner as if it were alive and could understand. The King inquired what made him so much less gay and cheerful than formerly, whereupon the Prince, seizing the moment as favourable, threw himself at his father's feet. "You are determined," he said, "to marry me to the Black Princess. You find advantages in that match which I cannot promise you with Desirée, but, sire, I perceive charms in the one I do not recognise in the other."

"And when have you seen these ladies?" asked the King.

"Their portraits have been brought to me," replied Prince Warrior—he was so named because he had won three great battles—"and I confess my passion for Princess Desirée is so great that if you do not retract the promise given to the Black Princess I shall die."

"It is, I suppose, with her portrait," said the King, "that you are pleased to hold conversations that make you a laughing-stock to the whole court. They think you mad, and if you knew all I have suffered on your account you would be ashamed of such weakness."

"I cannot blame myself for my passion," said the Prince. "When you see the portrait of this beautiful girl, you will understand my feelings."

"Go and fetch it at once," said the King impatiently. He brought the picture to the King, and he was almost as much enchanted with it as his son. "Well, my dear Warrior," he said, "I consent to what you wish. The presence of such a lovely Princess at my court will renew my youth. I will despatch ambassadors to the Black Princess without delay, to announce to her that I must break my word. Even at the risk of a war, I will do as I say."

The Prince knelt and respectfully kissed his father's hand. He was so joyful that the courtiers hardly recognised him. He urged the King to send ambassadors not only to the Black Princess but also to Desirée, and for the latter embassy wished him to choose a very wealthy and capable man. The King fixed on Becafigue, a very eloquent young noble, with a rent roll of a hundred millions. He loved Prince Warrior passionately, and to please him ordered the most magnificent equipage and most gorgeous liveries that could be procured. He made the greatest possible haste, for the Prince's love increased daily, and he incessantly implored him to set out. "My life," he said, confidentially, "is ebbing away. I grow distracted when I think how likely it is that the Princess's father has pledged his word to another, and may not be willing to break his promise for me, and I shall thus lose her forever." In order to gain

time, Becafigue reassured him, for he was anxious that the expense he was at should do him honour. He had eighty coaches shining with gold and diamonds. There were fifty coaches, and twenty-four thousand pages on horseback, with the rest of the *cortège* to match.

At the farewell audience the prince embraced his ambassador affectionately: "Remember, my dear Becafigue," he said, "that my life depends on the negotiation of this marriage; leave nothing undone to gain my adorable princess." He entrusted to him a thousand presents as remarkable for the gallantry of their design as for their splendour. Amorous devices were engraved on diamond seals, watches were set in carbuncles adorned with Desirée's monogram, and heart-shaped ruby bracelets, and indeed everything most likely to please her, abounded.

The ambassador also took with him the Prince's portrait, painted by so skilful an artist that it spoke and made pretty speeches.

Rumour of his coming and his errand preceded him. The King and Queen were delighted; they held his master in high esteem, and had heard of the Prince's great deeds, yet they were more pleased with his personal merits, and felt certain that if they sought through the wide world for a husband for their daughter they could not find one more worthy of her.

A palace was prepared for Becafigue's reception, and the court was ordered to appear in its very greatest magnificence.

The king and queen had made up their minds that the ambassador should see Desirée, but Fairy Tulip came to the queen and said: "Be sure, madam, not to take Becafigue to our child"—for thus she spoke of the princess—"it would be dangerous for her to see him just yet, and do not send her to the king until after her fifteenth birthday. I am certain, if she goes before, some misfortune will occur." The queen embraced the good Tulip and promised to follow her advice, and they then paid the princess a visit.

The ambassador arrived. The passing of the procession took twenty-three hours, for there were six thousand mules with bells and shoes of gold, and trappings of gold-embroidered velvet and brocade. The streets were crowded, everybody turned out to see the sight, and so glad were they of his coming that the king and queen went in person to meet him. Since they can so easily be imagined, it is useless to repeat here the speech Becafigue made, and the compliments that passed on both sides, but he was extremely surprised when his request to see the Princess Desirée was refused. "It is not from caprice, Sir Becafigue," said the king, "that we deny what

you have every right to demand; you must hear our daughter's strange story.

"At the time of her birth a fairy conceived a great hatred for her, and threatened her with a terrible misfortune if she saw daylight before the age of fifteen: she dwells, therefore, in an underground palace. We had decided to take you to visit her, but Fairy Tulip advised us not to do so." "Then, sir, am I to return without her?" said Becafigue. "You are willing, you declare, to give her in marriage to my master's son who awaits her with the utmost impatience, and yet you allow yourself to be influenced by such trifles as fairies' predictions! Here is Prince Warrior's portrait, which I was asked to give her; it is so excellent a likeness that when I look at it I seem to see him in person." He exhibited it, and the portrait, only instructed how to speak to the princess, said: "Lovely Desirée, you cannot imagine with what ardour I await you; come soon to our court to adorn it with your matchless beauty." The king and queen were so astonished that they asked Becafigue to give it to them to take to the princess; he was delighted to do so, and entrusted it to their care.

The queen had not informed her daughter of what was going on, and had forbidden her attendants to tell her of the ambassador's arrival. But they had

not obeyed her, and the princess knew that a marriage was in contemplation for her; she was, however, so prudent that she did not let her mother think she suspected anything. When the prince's portrait, which made her affectionate and gallant speeches, was shown her, she was extremely surprised, for she had never seen anything to equal it; the prince's good looks, intelligent expression, and regular features astonished her as much as what it said. "How would you like," said the queen, smiling, "to have a husband like this prince?" "Madam," she replied, "it is not for me to choose; I shall be satisfied with anyone you destine for me." "But," continued the queen, "would you not think it fortunate if my choice fell on him?" Desirée lowered her eyes, blushed, and made no reply. The queen took her in her arms and kissed her many times: she could not help shedding tears at the thought of so soon losing her daughter, for in three months she would be fifteen; but, concealing her grief, she told her all about the illustrious Becafigue's embassy, and gave her the exquisite presents he had brought for her.

When the prince learned that it would be three months before he could have his beloved Desirée, his laments distressed the whole court. He neither slept nor ate, he became melancholy and dreamy, and his brilliant complexion took the colour of marigolds.

He spent whole days lying on a couch in his closet, gazing at the Princess's portrait, and writing it letters as if it had been able to read them. His strength gradually declined, he fell dangerously ill, and neither physician nor doctor was needed to discover the cause.

The sorrowing father, therefore, resolved as a last chance to go in person to the king and queen and implore them in pity for the prince's condition not to delay a marriage that, if they waited till the princess's fifteenth birthday, would never take place at all.

The king's advanced age only permitted him to travel in a litter, a mode of progression far too slow for his son's impatience, so that he again sent the trusty Becafigue travelling post, and bearing pathetic letters to induce the king and queen to accede to his wishes.

During this time Desirée found quite as much pleasure in looking at the prince's portrait as he did at hers. At every possible opportunity she visited the place where it was kept, and in spite of all her efforts to hide her sentiments, they were easily discovered. Gilliflower and Long-Thorn, her ladies-in-waiting, saw that her mind was disturbed. Gilliflower loved her passionately and faithfully; Long-Thorn was secretly jealous of her.

When his mission was known, the ambassador despatched to the court of the Black Princess was scarcely well received; the Ethiopian was a very vindictive person. She had seen a portrait of the prince and had fallen passionately in love with it. She asked the ambassador: "Does not your master consider me rich and beautiful enough? Look round my realms; you can scarcely find any of greater extent. Come into my treasury and you will see more gold than is contained in the mines of Peru. Look at my jet black complexion, my flat nose and thick lips; is anything wanting that makes a woman handsome?" "Madam," replied the ambassador, who feared a beating worse than that administered to the Turks, "as much as a subject dares, I blame my master's conduct, and if heaven had placed me on a throne, I know with whom I should hope to share it."

But the Ethiopian was too deeply offended with Prince Warrior to forgive him. She got into an ivory chariot drawn by six ostriches that went at the rate of ten leagues an hour. She hastened to the palace of the fairy of the spring, who was her godmother and best friend; she told her what had happened, and begged her to help her to be revenged. The fairy sympathised with the princess, and consulted the book of all knowledge. She discovered

that Prince Warrior had renounced the Black Princess for Princess Desirée, that he loved her distractedly, and had fallen sick with his longing to see her. That news rekindled the fairy's anger; it had been almost extinguished, and as she had not seen Desirée since the time of her birth, it is most likely that had it not been for the Black Princess she would never have done her any harm. "What!" she exclaimed, "this wretched Desirée is always doing something to annoy me. No, my dearest princess, I will not allow you to suffer such an affront; I will enlist the heavens and elements in your behalf. Go home and rely on your god-mother." The Black Princess thanked her, and made her presents of flowers and fruit, which she received with much condescension.

Meanwhile the ambassador Becafigue had travelled with all possible speed to the capital of Desirée's father. He threw himself at the feet of the king and queen, and told them in the most pathetic words how the prince would die without Desirée, and that as she would be fifteen in three months, it was impossible any misfortune could happen to her in so short a time; moreover, he took the liberty to warn them that such a firm belief in fairies was scarcely in keeping with their high position. In fact, in the end his hearers were convinced by his eloquence.

The queen hastened to her daughter's palace, and

told her all that had happened. Desirée was so overcome with grief that she fainted. "Do not distress yourself, my dear daughter," said the queen; "his cure lies in your hands; I am only anxious on account of the threats of the fairy of the spring at your birth." "I think, madam," Desirée replied, "that by taking certain precautions we can outwit the wicked fairy. For instance, cannot I travel in a close carriage so that I need not see the daylight? It could be opened at night to admit food, and thus I should reach Prince Warrior without accident."

The idea commended itself to the queen, and when the king was made acquainted with it he also approved. Becafigue was summoned, and received a promise that the princess should set out very soon, and that he might at once return to his master with the good news. The ambassador, overjoyed, threw himself at their feet, thanked them, and set off, without, however, having seen the princess.

Had Desirée been less prepossessed in the prince's favour, she would have felt the separation from her parents very keenly, but there are sentiments that stifle all the rest. A coach was constructed for her, with the outside of green velvet, ornamented with gold plaques, and lined inside with silver brocade, embroidered in pink; there were no windows, it was very large, and closed as tightly as a box. The keys

were given to the charge of one of the first lords of the kingdom.

After giving her most beautiful jewels, and some handsome gowns, after farewells that almost suffocated the king, queen, and court, in their efforts to keep from weeping, Desirée was shut up in the dark coach with the ladies-in-waiting, Long-Thorn and Gilliflower.

It has perhaps been forgotten that Long-Thorn did not love the princess, while she had been deeply smitten with Prince Warrior's speaking portrait. In fact, so severely had Cupid's dart wounded her, that when they were on the point of setting out she told her mother that if the princess's marriage took place she should die; if, therefore, she wished to save her life, she must find a means of breaking off the match.

When the queen sent her beloved child away, she recommended her beyond everything to this bad woman's care. "What a precious trust I am confiding to you!" she said; "it is dearer to me than my life. Take good care of my daughter's health, and above all guard her carefully against seeing daylight, for then all would be lost. You know the misfortune with which she is threatened, and Prince Warrior's ambassador has promised me that until she is fifteen she shall be placed in a castle where she

shall see no other light than that of wax candles." The queen heaped presents on the woman in order to make more sure of her. She promised to watch over the princess, and directly on their arrival to write the queen everything that had happened.

The king and queen, trusting her fully, felt no further anxiety, and were thus a little consoled for their daughter's departure. But Long-Thorn, learning from the officers who opened the carriage every evening to give them food that they were getting near the town where they were expected, urged her mother to carry out her plan without delay, for if the king or prince came to meet them it would be too late. About mid-day, when the heat of the sun is greatest, she suddenly cut the canopy of the coach with a big knife she had had made for the purpose, and then for the first time Princess Desirée saw daylight. She had scarcely looked at it when, sighing deeply, she jumped out of the coach in the form of a white hind, and ran to the neighbouring forest where she concealed herself in a gloomy spot to lament in solitude the beautiful form she had just lost.

The fairy of the spring, who was the cause of this unlucky adventure, finding that the princess's companions knew their duty, and that some were following her into the wood, while others set off to the town to inform Prince Warrior of the accident, called up

a dreadful storm. The thunder and lightning were so terrific that they frightened the most courageous; and thus by means of her vast knowledge the fairy succeeded in carrying the faithful servants far away from the place where their presence was troublesome.

Only Long-Thorn, her mother, and Gilliflower remained. The last ran after her mistress, making the woods and rocks resound with her cries and lamentations. The other two, delighted to be left alone, did not lose a moment in carrying out their plans. Long-Thorn put on Desirée's handsomest gown; the royal cloak made for the wedding was of unparalleled magnificence, and every diamond in the crown was two or three times as big as your fist; the sceptre was of a single ruby, and the globe she held in the other hand was a pearl bigger than your head; it was very precious and exceedingly heavy, for to convince the people that she was the princess.

Thus attired, Long-Thorn, accompanied by her mother as train-bearer, went towards the town. The false princess walked in a most dignified manner, thinking the king and prince would come to meet her, and, in fact, they had scarcely gone any distance when they perceived a troop of cavalry. In its midst were two litters shining with gold and precious stones, borne by mules and decorated with large bunches of green feathers, the princess's favourite

colour. The king who was in one and the prince in the other did not know what to think of the ladies who were approaching them. The most eager of the horsemen galloped up to them and, from the splendour of their costume, judged them to be persons of distinction. They dismounted and addressed them respectfully: "Will you be good enough," said Long-Thorn, "to tell me who are in those litters?" "Ladies," they replied, "the king and his son, who come to meet Princess Desirée." "Go, if you please," she said, "and tell them I am she. A fairy, jealous of my happiness, dispersed my attendants by means of a terrible storm, but my lady-in-waiting here has charge of my jewels and of letters from my father."

The cavaliers kissed the hem of her robe and speedily announced to the king that the princess was approaching. "What!" he exclaimed, "she comes on foot and in broad daylight!" They then informed him of what she had told them. The prince, burning with impatience, summoned them, and without asking them any questions, said: "Come now, confess, is she not a miracle of beauty, a prodigy, a most perfect princess?" To the prince's great surprise, they made no answer. "There is so much to praise," he continued, "that I suppose you prefer to be silent." "Sir," said the boldest of them, "you will

see her yourself directly; apparently the fatigue of the journey has affected her appearance." The prince was greatly astonished, and had he not been too weak would have jumped out of the litter in order to satisfy without delay his impatience and curiosity. The king, however, got out of his, and advancing with all his court, came up with the pretended princess; but, directly he saw her, he uttered a loud cry, and falling back a few paces: "What do I see?" he said, "what perfidy!" "Sire," said the lady-in-waiting, boldly coming forward, "here is Princess Desirée, with letters from the king and queen. I also deliver over to you the casket of jewels entrusted to my care at our setting out."

The king preserved a gloomy silence, and the prince leaning on Becafigue approached Long-Thorn. O ye gods! How did he feel when he saw the girl? Her extraordinary appearance almost produced terror in the spectator. She was so tall that the princess's gown scarcely came below her knees, she was frightfully thin, her nose was like a parrot's beak, and was of a bright red colour; her teeth were black and uneven, and indeed she was as ugly as Desirée was beautiful.

The prince, whose mind had been entirely filled with his beautiful princess, was almost paralysed with horror at the sight of this girl: he had not the

strength to utter a word. He looked at her in astonishment, and turning to the king, said: "I am betrayed; this person is not in the least like the lovely picture that won my heart; I have been deceived, and my life will be the cost." "What do you mean, sir?" said Long-Thorn. "How have you been deceived? I promise you you will make no mistake if you marry me." Her impertinence and arrogance knew no bounds, yet the lady-in-waiting almost surpassed her. "My dear princess," she said, "what sort of a country can this be? Is this the way to receive a lady of rank? What inconsistency! What conduct! Your father must obtain satisfaction." "That will be rather for us," said the king. "We were promised a beautiful princess and instead are sent a skeleton, a mummy, frightful to behold! I am no longer surprised this treasure should have been shut up for fifteen years. Your king wanted to made a dupe of some one, and, since he has chosen us, we will be revenged."

"What outrageous behaviour!" exclaimed the pretended princess. "How foolish I was to trust the promises of such people! See how wrong it is to let a painter flatter you a little! But does it not happen every day? If princes refused their brides for that reason, not many of them would marry."

The king and his son were too angry to reply: they

got into their litters again, and without any ceremony one of the horsemen put the princess up behind him, and the lady-in-waiting was treated in the same way. By the king's orders, they were taken to the town and shut up in the castle of the three gables.

Prince Warrior was so overcome by the blow that for a time he was unable to find words in which to express his grief. Death was preferable to marriage with the woman whom he believed to be Desirée. He felt he could no longer endure life at court, and determined to leave the palace secretly and spend the rest of his life in some solitary place.

As soon as he began to feel better he departed, leaving a letter for the king promising to return when his grief had become less keen. He begged him meanwhile to think of their common vengeance and not to set the ugly princess free.

The king's grief on reading his son's letter may be easily imagined. Indeed, the separation from so beloved a child almost cost the father his life. While everybody was occupied in comforting him, the prince and Becafigue were journeying far away, and at the end of three days found themselves in a big forest. The thickly growing trees made it so dark, and the fresh grass and the murmuring brooks made it so pleasant, that the prince, tired out with the long journey, dismounted; he threw himself sadly on the

ground, his hand supporting his head, and he was so weak that he could scarcely speak. "Sir," said Becafigue, "while you are resting I will go and find some fruit, and have a look round this place."

It is so long since we left the hind in the wood that I must now speak of the matchless princess. She wept in despair when she saw her form mirrored in the brook. "What do I see?" she said. "I have to-day undergone the strangest change the fairies' power could devise for an innocent princess. How long will this change last? Where can I hide to be out of the reach of lions, bears, and wolves? How can I live on grass?" She asked herself a thousand such questions, and suffered the most cruel agony possible. The only consoling circumstance was that she was as beautiful a hind as she had been a princess.

Being exceedingly hungry, Desirée nibbled grass with a good appetite, and was vastly astonished to find such a thing possible. She lay down on the moss, and spent the night in the greatest terror. She heard the cries of wild beasts near her, and often forgetting she was a hind, attempted to climb a tree. The dawn reassured her a little; she admired its beauty, and the sun seemed to her something so wonderful that she could not leave off looking at it: all she had heard of it fell far short of the reality.

It was her only consolation in that desolate spot, where she remained for several days quite alone.

Fairy Tulip, who had always loved the princess, although much distressed at her misfortune, was extremely vexed with her mother and herself for paying so little attention to her advice; she had told them over and over again that if the princess left the subterranean castle before she was fifteen, mischief would follow. However, she could not leave her to the anger of the fairy of the spring, and it was she who led Gilliflower to the forest to comfort the princess in her misfortune.

The beautiful hind was quietly feeding beside the brook, when Gilliflower, overcome with fatigue, lay down to rest and sadly began to wonder in which direction she ought to go to find her mistress. The hind saw her, jumped the brook, which was both wide and deep, and threw herself on Gilliflower and tenderly caressed her.

Gilliflower looked at her attentively, and saw with extreme astonishment tears fall from her eyes; she then felt sure it could be no other than her princess. She kissed her feet with as much respect and affection as if they had been her hands. She spoke; the hind understood her but could not reply; the tears and sighs of both were redoubled. Gilliflower promised her mistress not to abandon her; the hind

made signs with her head and eyes that she was glad and felt comforted in her trouble.

They remained together nearly the whole day. The hind, fearing lest her faithful Gilliflower would be hungry, led her to a place in the forest where she had observed wild fruit growing; she ate a great quantity, for she was famished. The meal ended, she became very anxious about where they could sleep. "Are you not afraid, beautiful hind," she said, "to spend the night here?" The hind raised her eyes to heaven and sighed. "But," continued Gilliflower, "you have already traversed a part of this solitude; are there no houses, no woodcutters, charcoal burners, or hermits?" By a shake of the head the hind showed that she had seen no one. "O ye gods!" exclaimed Gilliflower, "I shall never see the morrow, even if I am lucky enough to escape tigers and bears. I am certain I should die of terror. But you must not think, my dear princess, that I should regret life on my own account; it is entirely on yours. Alas! could anything be more miserable than to leave you in this place, destitute of all comfort?" The little hind began to weep, and sobbed almost like a human being.

Fairy Tulip, who loved her tenderly, was touched by her tears; and now suddenly appearing before her, said: "I am too sorry for you to scold you."

The hind and Gilliflower interrupted her, the former by licking her hands and caressing her, the latter imploring her to take pity on the princess and restore her to her natural form. "That is not in my power," said Tulip. "She who has worked this mischief is too influential, but I can shorten the time of penance, and make it less disagreeable by permitting the princess to leave her hind form directly night takes the place of day; she must assume it again, however, each day at dawn, and roam the plains and forests."

The princess testified her joy by leaps and bounds that greatly delighted Tulip. "Go down that narrow path," she said, "you will find there a hut not so bad for so rustic a situation." With these words she vanished. They obeyed her and came upon an old woman seated on her door-step weaving a wicker basket. Gilliflower made a curtesy, and said: "Will you give me and my hind shelter? I want a small room." "Yes, my fair daughter," she replied, "I will gladly give you a retreat here. Come in, you and your hind." She led them into a very pretty room, panelled with cherry-wood; it contained two little white beds with fine linen sheets, and it was all so simple and clean that the princess has said since that nothing could have been more to her liking.

As soon as night approached, Desirée ceased

to be a hind; she kissed her beloved Gilliflower, thanked her for following her fortunes, and promised when her penance was over to do all in her power to render her happy. The old woman knocked gently at the door, and without going in, gave Gilliflower excellent fruit of which the princess ate with much appetite. They then went to bed. When daylight appeared, Desirée became a hind again and began to scratch at the door. Gilliflower opened it and, although it was not for long, they showed a sincere regret at parting; the hind darted into the thickest part of the wood, and began to roam about as usual.

I have already mentioned that Prince Warrior had stopped in the forest, and that Becafigue had gone in quest of food. It was late when he reached the old woman's cottage. He addressed her politely, and asked her for the things he needed for his master. She at once filled a basket for him. "If you spend the night here," she said, "without shelter of some kind, I fear an accident may happen to you. The accommodation I can offer you is very poor, but it will at least put you out of the reach of lions." He thanked her, and told her he was with a friend to whom he would point out the wisdom of accepting her kind offer. The prince was prevailed on to come to the good woman's house. She was waiting at the

door, and very quietly led them to a room similar to that of the princess and only divided from it by a partition wall.

The prince, as usual, passed a disturbed night; as soon as the first rays of the sun shone in at his window, he rose and took his way into the forest in the hope of diverting his misery, telling Becafigue he preferred to be alone.

For some time he walked on without any fixed purpose, and at last reached a mossy spot sheltered by trees, out of which darted a hind. He could not help following her; the chase had been his ruling passion; but since another passion had possessed his heart, he had not indulged in it to any great extent. All the same he now followed the poor hind, and from time to time let fly arrows that, although they did not wound her, nearly caused her to die of fear. Her friend Tulip protected her, and it certainly needed a fairy's helping hand to prevent the serious effects of such well-aimed shafts. The hind was excessively fatigued; she was altogether unaccustomed to so much exercise. At length she turned down a path, and happily the hunter lost sight of her.

After a day spent in that manner, the hind joyfully welcomed the hour for retiring, and turned her steps towards the house where Gilliflower was impatiently awaiting her. Directly she reached her room,

she threw herself on her bed out of breath and worn out. Gilliflower, eager to know what had happened, caressed her. At the appointed hour the princess resumed her natural shape, and throwing her arms round her favourite's neck, said: "Alas! I thought I had nothing to fear but the fairy of the spring and the wild inhabitants of this forest, but I was chased to-day by a young huntsman whom I hardly looked at, so anxious was I to get away. The arrows he aimed at me threatened inevitable death; indeed, I cannot tell by what good fortune I escaped." "You must not go out again, my princess," replied Gilliflower; "you must spend the time of your penance in this room. I will go to the nearest town and purchase books to divert our minds; we will read the newest fairy tales, and ourselves compose songs and poems." "My dear girl," said the princess, "the delightful thought of Prince Warrior is enough to occupy my mind pleasantly, but the same power that forces me to be a hind during the day makes me against my will act as they do; thus I run, jump, eat grass, and at those times the confinement of a room would be intolerable to me." She was so fatigued that as soon as she had satisfied her hunger, she closed her beautiful eyes till dawn appeared. Then the usual change took place, and she returned to the forest.

The prince likewise rejoined his friend in the evening. "I spent my time," he said, "in hunting the most beautiful hind I have ever seen; she escaped me a hundred times with the most wonderful skill. I aimed so surely that I cannot conceive how I missed her; as soon as it is light I must go and look for her, and I shall not fail to find her." He went early to the same spot where he had first seen the hind. But she, fearing a repetition of yesterday's disagreeable adventure, took good care not to go there. The prince searched everywhere, and walked about for a long time. It was very hot, and he was much delighted to find apples whose rosy colour was greatly to his taste; he gathered some and ate them, and was soon sleeping soundly, lying on the fresh grass under trees that seemed the trysting-place of a thousand melodious birds.

While he slept, the timid hind, eager to discover a place of shelter, came to the very spot where he was. If she had seen him sooner, she would have fled, but as she was so near him, she could not help looking at him. His deep slumber gave her courage, and she had leisure to examine his features. But imagine her state of mind when she recognised him! His charming image had become so deeply impressed on her memory that she could not have forgotten it in so short a time. O Cupid, Cupid, what is your pur-

pose? Is the hind to die by the hands of her lover? Yes, indeed, she is exposed to that danger; there is no possibility of safety. She lay down some paces from him, and her joy at the sight of him was so great that she could not take her eyes off him for a moment. She sighed and moaned, and becoming bolder, she went nearer, touched him, and he woke up.

He was much surprised to recognise the hind that had given him so much trouble, and that he had sought so long in vain; he could not at all understand her familiarity. She did not wait until he tried to seize her, but ran away at the top of her speed, and he followed as quickly as he could. Now and again they stopped to take breath, for both the beautiful hind and the prince were still tired from yesterday's chase.

After going all round the forest, the hind, too fatigued to continue running, slackened her pace, and the prince, feeling more joyful than he had believed possible, came up with her. He saw that all her strength was spent, and she lay, a little half-dead creature, expecting her life to be taken by her conqueror; but, on the contrary, he began to caress her. "Beautiful hind," he said, "there is nothing to fear; I want to take you away with me, and keep you with me always." He cut down some branches

skilfully, bent them, covered them with moss, and scattered roses over them that grew on the bushes hard by; taking the hind in his arms, he supported her head against his neck, and laid her gently on the improvised couch. He sat near her, and from time to time gathered fine grass which she ate out of his hand.

Although the prince knew she could not understand him, he went on talking to her. Notwithstanding the pleasure she felt in his society, as night came on she began to grow anxious. "What would happen," she said to herself, "if he saw me suddenly change my form? He would be startled, and would avoid me, or if not, there would be everything to fear alone with him in this forest." She thought continually of some way of escape, when luckily he himself provided the means. Thinking she must be thirsty, the prince went in search of a brook to which he might take her. While he was gone she stole off and reached the cottage where Gilliflower was awaiting her. She threw herself on her bed, night came, the change took place, and she related the day's adventure.

"Would you believe it?" she said, "my Prince Warrior is in this forest; he is the hunter who has been chasing me for two days, and at last he caught me and caressed me again and again. His portrait

falls far short of the original, he is a hundred times handsomer than the painting. Am I not unfortunate to be obliged to avoid him, the prince destined for me by my nearest relatives, who loves me, and whom I love in return? Why should a wicked fairy conceive a dislike to me on the day of my birth, and make all my life miserable?" She began to weep; Gilliflower tried to console her with the hope that her troubles would soon be turned into pleasures.

When the prince had found a stream, he returned to his beloved hind; but she was no longer where he had left her. In vain he searched for her, and felt as much annoyed with her as if she had been a reasoning being. "I am always," he said, "it seems, to have to complain of that deceitful and faithless sex!" Very melancholy he returned to the old woman's house, and in relating his adventure with the hind to his friend, accused her of ingratitude. Becafigue could not help smiling at the prince's anger, and advised him to punish the hind the next time he met her. "That is my only reason for remaining here," replied the prince; "afterwards we will pursue our journey farther."

Day returned, and with it the princess resumed the form of a white hind. She was undecided how to act; whether to go to the prince's usual haunts, or to take a different route and so avoid him. She chose

the latter course, and went far away; but the prince, equally cunning, did the same, thinking she would try that trick, and found her in the thickest part of the forest. She had just begun to think herself safe when she saw him. Over the bushes she sprang and leaped, and, as if she dreaded worse treatment on account of the trick she had played him, she was swifter than the wind. But as she was crossing a path, he took such sure aim that he shot her leg with his arrow. She felt a violent pain, and her strength deserting her, she fell down.

Cruel and barbarous Love, what were you thinking of? You permit a matchless girl to be wounded by her tender lover! But the sad accident was inevitable, for the fairy of the spring destined it to be the turning-point of the adventure. The prince was much distressed to see that the hind was bleeding. He applied herbs to the wound to relieve the pain, and again improvised a couch with branches. He held the hind's head against his knees. "You have only yourself to blame, fickle creature," he said, "for your suffering. Why did you forsake me yesterday? You will not have the chance to-day, for I intend to take you with me." The hind made no reply; indeed what could she have said? She was in the wrong, and was unable to speak; it is certainly of rare occurrence that those who are in the wrong

keep silence. The prince caressed her again and again. "How sorry I am to have wounded you," he said; "you will hate me for it, and I want you to love me." It would seem that some hidden genius inspired him what to say to the hind. At length it was time to return to his old hostess; he burdened himself with his prey, and it gave him no little trouble; he led it, carried it, and sometimes dragged it.

The hind had not the least desire to go with him. "What will happen," she said, "when night comes and I am alone with the prince? I would sooner die." She made herself as heavy as possible, and he began to perspire with the exertion; it was not far to the cottage, but he saw that without help he would be unable to get there. He decided to fetch his faithful Becafigue, but before he left his prey, fearing she would escape, he tied her with many ribbons to the trunk of a tree.

Alas! who would have dreamed that the most beautiful princess in the world would one day be treated thus by the prince who loved her! She tried in vain to break the ribbons, but her efforts only drew the knots tighter. She was almost on the point of strangling herself with a slip-knot he had tied most unskilfully when Gilliflower, tired of being shut up in her room, went out to get some air, and came to

the place where the poor hind was struggling. Her consternation at her mistress's condition may easily be imagined. The ribbons were knotted in so many different places that she was not very quick at undoing them, so that just as she was ready to take the hind away the prince and Becafigue arrived on the scene.

"Although my respect for you, madam, is very great," said the prince, "allow me to protest against the theft you are committing. I wounded the hind, she is mine, I love her, and entreat you to leave her to me." "Sir," replied Gilliflower, politely, for she was both nice-looking and well-bred, "the hind was mine first. I would rather lose my life than my hind; if you wish to make sure she knows me, let me set her free. Come, my little white darling, embrace me." The hind threw herself on the girl's neck. "Kiss my right cheek"; the order was obeyed; "touch my heart"; she laid her foot on it; "sigh," and she sighed. The prince could no longer doubt the truth of Gilliflower's words. "I give her up to you," he said, politely, "but I confess I am very sorry to do so." She at once departed with her hind.

They did not know that the prince lived in their house; he followed them, and was surprised to see them enter the good old woman's cottage. He reached it soon after, and, impelled by curiosity,

asked the woman who the young lady was; she replied that she did not know, she had received her and the hind, she paid well and lived in the completest isolation. Becafigue asked where her room was situated and heard it was next to his, separated only by the partition wall.

When they gained their apartment, Becafigue told the prince he was the most mistaken of men if the girl with the hind had not lived with Princess Desirée, and he felt sure he had seen her at the palace when he had acted as ambassador there. "Why do you revive my recollection of that fatal undertaking? By what chance could she be here?" "That I cannot tell, sir," added Becafigue, "but I should like another look at her, and as nothing but a wooden framework divides us I am going to make a hole." "What useless curiosity," said the prince sadly, for Becafigue's words had brought back all his sorrows. He opened the window that looked on to the forest and fell dreaming.

Meanwhile, by Becafigue's exertions, a hole was made through which he saw the lovely princess dressed in a gown of silver brocade, embroidered with gold and emeralds and worked with flowers in red silk. Her hair fell in long curls over her beautiful shoulders, her complexion was brilliant and her eyes were shining. Gilliflower was on her knees bind-

ing up the arm which still bled copiously. They both seemed much troubled by the wound. "Let me die," said the princess; "death is preferable to the wretched life I am leading, to be a hind all day, to see the man whom I was destined to marry, without being able to speak to him, and tell him my wretched story! Alas! if you knew how pathetic were the things he said to me, what a sweet-sounding voice he has, what noble and attractive manners, you would pity me even more than you do, for my inability to explain matters to him."

Becafigue's astonishment at all he saw and heard may be easily imagined. He ran to the prince, tore him from the window with more joy than can be expressed. "Sir," he said, "come to the wall without delay, you will see the original of the portrait that enchanted you." The prince no sooner looked than he recognised his princess; if he had not feared he must be the victim of some strange sorcery, he would have been beside himself with joy.

His inclination was, of course, to think it all right; we are ever ready to persuade ourselves of what we wish, and on such an occasion the one thing to do was to seek an explanation. He, therefore, without delay, knocked gently at the door of the princess's room. Gilliflower, thinking it was the good old woman, and needing her help to bind up the princess's wound,

hastened to open it, and was vastly surprised to see the prince, who immediately entered, and threw himself at Desirée's feet. His great joy prevented him making any coherent speech, so that, notwithstanding my efforts to learn what he said in those first moments, I have found no one able to tell me. The princess's answers were equally confused; but Love, that so often serves as interpreter to the dumb, made a third at the interview and convinced the lovers that never before were such charming things said. And certainly it was all very tender and pathetic; tears, sighs, vows, and smiles played a part. Thus the night passed and day began to break; Desirée had not given a thought to its approach, and she never again became a hind. She noticed the circumstance, and nothing could equal her joy. The prince was too dear to her not to be allowed to share her gladness. She told him her story with a charm and natural eloquence excelling that of the cleverest men and women.

"My lovely princess," he exclaimed, "was it you I wounded in the form of a white hind? How can I atone for so great a crime? Will it be enough if I die of grief before your eyes?" He was so distressed that his grief was depicted in his face. This troubled Desirée more than her wound; she assured him it was very slight, and that she rather took

pleasure in a misfortune that had been productive of so much good.

Her manner of saying this was so kind that he could not but believe her protestations. To explain everything on his side, he told her of the fraud of Long-Thorn and her mother, adding that he must hasten to inform his father of his good fortune in finding Desirée, because he intended to wage war with her father in revenge for the affront he thought had been put upon him. Desirée begged him to send letters by Becafigue. He was about to obey her when a loud sound of trumpets, clarions, big drums and little drums was heard in the forest. It seemed as if a large concourse of people was passing close to the little house. The prince looked out of the window, recognising several officers and his own flags and standards: he ordered them to halt till he could join them.

The army was delighted; the men thought the prince meant to lead them against Desirée's father. The king, in spite of his great age, was commanding them in person. He was in a litter of gold-embroidered velvet, followed by an open chariot in which were Long-Thorn and her mother. Prince Warrior, perceiving the litter, hastened up to it, and the king embraced him very tenderly. "Where do you come from, my dear son?" he exclaimed; "how could you

grieve me by going away?" "Sire," replied the prince, "deign to hear my story." The king got out of the litter, and withdrawing to a retired spot, his son told him of the fortunate meeting and of Long-Thorn's villainy.

The King was delighted, clasped his hands and raised his eyes to heaven in token of gratitude. Princess Desirée looked more beautiful than all the stars together. She mounted a magnificent horse that curvetted finely; her head was adorned with feathers of many colours, and the biggest diamonds imaginable were to be seen on her gown. She wore the costume of a huntress. Gilliflower, who accompanied her, was equally resplendent. This was the result of Tulip's protection; she had looked after everything carefully and successfully. The pretty wooden house had been built on purpose for the princess, and in the guise of an old woman Tulip had entertained her for several days.

When the prince had recognised his troops, and had gone to meet his father, Tulip entered Desirée's room, cured the wound in her arm by breathing on it, and gave her the rich garments in which she appeared before the king. He said all that was kind and suited to the occasion, and entreated her not to delay becoming his subjects' queen, for he went on: "I am determined to give up my kingdom

to Prince Warrior in order to make him more worthy of you." Desirée replied with all the politeness to be expected from a highly bred lady, and then looking at the two prisoners in the chariot who had covered their faces with their hands, generously demanded their pardon, and that they might be allowed the use of the chariot to take them wherever they wished to go. The king consented, all the while admiring her kind heart and praising her highly.

The army was ordered to return, and the prince mounted his horse to accompany his lovely princess. They were received in the capital with great shouts of joy. The preparations made for the wedding were of a very solemn character on account of the presence of the six kind fairies who loved the princess. They gave her the richest presents imaginable; among others, the magnificent palace where the queen had visited them suddenly appeared in the air, borne by fifty thousand Cupids. They placed it in a beautiful plain by the river side. After a gift like that, no other seemed of any importance.

Faithful Becafigue asked his master to speak to Gilliflower, and when he wedded the princess, to marry him to her. The prince was quite agreeable, and the girl was very glad to find so advantageous a match in a foreign land. Fairy Tulip, who was more generous than her sisters, gave her four gold

mines in the Indies, so that her husband might not be able to say he was richer than she. The marriage festivities lasted for several months and some new entertainment was forthcoming every day. The whole world has sung the White Hind's adventures.

MADAME HOLLE

WIDOW had two daughters, one of whom was beautiful and industrious, the other idle and ugly. But this ugly one the mother loved best, because she was her own child; and she cared so little for the other that she made her do all the work, and be quite a Cinderella in the house.

The poor maiden was obliged to go every day, and sit by a well in the broad highroad, and spin till her fingers bled.

One day, when the spindle was covered with blood, she dipped it into the well to wash it. As she was doing so, it slipped from her hand and fell to the bottom. In tears, she ran and told her stepmother what had happened.

The woman scolded her in a most violent manner, and was so merciless that she said, "As you have let the spindle fall into the water, you may go in and fetch it out."

Then the maiden went back to the well, and, hardly

knowing what to do, threw herself into the water to fetch the spindle.

She lost all consciousness, but, as her senses returned, she found herself in a beautiful meadow on which the sun was shining and thousands of flowers grew.

She walked across this meadow, till she came to a baker's oven, which was full of new bread, and the loaves cried, "Ah, pull us out! pull us out! or we shall burn; we have been so long baking!"

Then she stepped near to the oven, and with the bread shovel took the loaves all out.

She walked on after this, and came to a tree full of apples and the tree cried, "Shake me! shake me! my apples are all quite ripe!"

Then she shook the tree till the fruit fell like rain, and at last there was not one left on it. After this, she gathered the apples into one large heap, and went on farther.

At last she came to a small house, out of which she saw an old woman peeping, who had such large teeth that the girl was frightened, and turned to run away.

But the old woman cried after her, "What does thou fear, dear child? Come and live with me, and do the work in the house, and I will make you so happy. You must, however, take care to make my

She shook the tree till the fruit fell

bed well, and to shake it with energy, for then the feathers fly about, and in the world they will say it snows, for I am Mother Holle."

As the old woman talked in this kind manner, the maiden readily agreed to enter her service.

She was anxious to do all to please her, and took care to shake up the bed well, so that the feathers might fly down like snowflakes. Therefore she had a very happy life, plenty to eat and drink, and she never heard an angry word.

But after she had stayed a time with Mother Holle, she began to feel sad, and could not tell why, till at last she found that she was homesick. And although it was a thousand times better than at home, here, she still wanted to go.

And the longing grew so strong that she was obliged to speak.

"I have such sorrow in my heart," she said, "that I cannot stay here any longer; I must return to my own people."

"Then," said Mother Holle, "I am pleased to hear that you are longing to go home; and as you have served me so well and truly, I will show you the way myself."

So she took her by the hand, and led her to a broad gateway. The gate was open, and as the young girl passed through, there fell upon her a shower of

gold, which clung to her dress, and remained hanging to it, so that she was covered with it.

"That is your reward for having been so industrious;" and as the old woman spoke she placed in her hand the spindle which had fallen into the well.

Then the great gate was closed, and the maiden found herself once more in the world, not far from her stepmother's house. As she entered the farmyard, a cock perched on the wall crowed loudly, and cried: "Kikeriki! our golden lady is come home."

Then she went in to her mother; and because she was so bedecked with gold, both the mother and sister welcomed her kindly. The maiden related all that had happened to her; and when the mother heard how much wealth had been gained by her stepdaughter, she was anxious that her own ugly and idle daughter should try her fortune.

So she made her go and sit by the well and spin. She pricked her finger, and pushed her hand in the thorn-bushes, till at last a few spots of blood dropped on the spindle.

Directly she saw these spots, she let it drop into the water, and sprang in after it herself. Just as her sister had done, she found herself in a beautiful meadow, and walked for some distance along the same path, till she came to the baker's oven.

She heard the loaves cry, "Pull us out! pull us

out! or we shall burn; we have been here so long baking."

But the idle girl answered, "No, indeed; I have no wish to soil my hands with your dirty oven;" and so she walked on till she came to the apple-tree.

"Shake me! shake me!" it cried, "for my apples are all quite ripe."

"I don't agree to that at all," she replied, "for some of the apples might fall on my head;" and as she spoke she walked lazily on farther.

When she at last stood before the door of Mother Holle's house, she had no fear of her great teeth, for she had heard about them, so she walked right up to her and offered to be her servant. Mother Holle accepted the offer, and for a whole day the girl was very industrious, and did everything that was told her, for she thought of the gold that was to be poured upon her.

But on the second day she gave way to her laziness, and on the third it was worse. Several days passed, and she would not get up in the mornings. The bed was never made or shaken, so that feathers could fly about, till at last Mother Holle was quite tired of her, and said she must go away.

The lazy girl was quite overjoyed at going, and thought the golden rain was sure to come when Mother Holle led her to the gate. But as she

passed under it a large kettle of pitch was upset over her.

"That is the reward of your service," said the old woman as she shut the gate. So the idle girl walked home with the pitch sticking all over her, and as she entered the court the cock on the wall cried out:

"Kikeriki! our smutty young lady is come home."

The pitch stuck closely, and hung all about her hair and her clothes, and do what she would, as long as she lived it never would come off.

THE SUN LADY—(SURYA BAI)

A POOR Milk-woman was once going into the town with cans full of milk to sell. She took with her her little daughter (a baby of about a year old), having no one to leave her with at home. Being tired she sat down by the road side placing the child and the cans of milk beside her; when, on a sudden, two large Eagles flew over-head; and one, swooping down, seized the child and flew away with her.

Very far, far away the Eagles carried the little baby; even beyond the borders of her native land, until they reached their home in a lofty tree. There the old Eagles had built a great nest: it was made of iron and wood, and was as big as a little house; there was iron all round, and to get in and out you had to go through seven iron doors.

In this stronghold they placed the little baby, and because she was like a young eaglet they called her Surya Bai (The Sun Lady). The Eagles both loved the child; and daily they flew into distant countries

to bring her rich and precious things,—clothes that had been made for princesses, precious jewels, wonderful playthings, all that was most costly and rare.

One day, when Surya Bai was twelve years' old, the old husband Eagle said to his wife: "Wife, our daughter has no diamond ring on her little finger, such as princesses wear; let us go and fetch her one." "Yes," said the other old Eagle, "but to fetch it we must go very far." "True," rejoined he, "such a ring is not to be got nearer than the Red Sea, and that is a twelve months' journey from here; nevertheless we will go!" So the Eagles started off, leaving Surya Bai in the strong nest, with twelve months' provisions (that she might not be hungry whilst they were away), and a little dog and cat to take care of her.

Not long after they were gone, the naughty little cat stole some food, for which Surya Bai punished her. The cat did not like being whipped, and she was still more annoyed at having been caught stealing; so, in revenge, she ran to the fireplace (they were obliged to keep a fire always burning in the Eagles' nest, as Surya Bai never went down from the tree, and would not otherwise have been able to cook her dinner), and put out the fire. When the little girl saw this, she was much vexed, for the cat had

eaten their last cooked provisions, and she did not know what they were to do for food. For three whole days Surya Bai puzzled over the difficulty, and for three whole days, she and the dog and the cat had nothing to eat. At last she thought she would climb to the edge of the nest and see if she could see any fire in the country below; and, if so, she would go down and ask the people who lighted it, to give her a little with which to cook her dinner. So she climbed to the edge of the nest. Then, very far away on the horizon, she saw a thin curl of blue smoke. So she let herself down from the tree, and all day long, she walked in the direction whence the smoke came. Towards evening she reached the place, and found it came from a small hut in which sat an old woman warming her hands over a fire.

Now, though Surya Bai did not know it, she had reached the Rakshas's[1] country, and this old woman was none other than a wicked old Rakshas, who lived with her son in the little hut. The young Rakshas, however, had gone out for the day. When the old Rakshas saw Surya Bai, she was much astonished, for the girl was beautiful as the Sun, and her rich dress was resplendent with jewels; and she said to herself: "How lovely this child is; what a dainty morsel she would be! Oh, if my son were only here

[1] Demoniacal Ogre.

we would kill her and boil her and eat her. I will try and detain her till his return." Then, turning to Surya Bai, she said: "Who are you and what do you want?" Surya Bai answered: "I am the daughter of the great Eagles, but they have gone a far journey to fetch me a diamond ring, and the fire has died out in the nest. Give me, I pray you, a little from your hearth." The Rakshas replied: "You shall certainly have some, only first pound this rice for me, for I am old and have no daughter to help me." Then Surya Bai pounded the rice, but the young Rakshas had not returned by the time she had finished, so the old Rakshas said to her: "If you are kind, grind this corn for me; for it is hard work for my old hands." Then she ground the corn, but still the young Rakshas came not; and the old Rakshas said to her: "Sweep the house for me first, and then I will give you the fire." So Surya Bai swept the house; but still the young Rakshas did not come. Then his mother said to Surya Bai: "Why should you be in such a hurry to go home? Fetch me some water from the well, and then you shall have the fire." And she fetched the water. When she had done so, Surya Bai said: "I have done all your bidding, now give me the fire, or I will go elsewhere and seek it."

The old Rakshas was grieved because her son had

not returned home; but she saw she could detain Surya Bai no longer, so she said: "Take the fire and go in peace; take also some parched corn and scatter it along the road as you go, so as to make a pretty little pathway from our house to yours,"—and so saying she gave Surya Bai several handfuls of parched corn. The girl took them fearing no evil, and as she went she scattered the grains on the road. Then she climbed back into the nest and shut the seven iron doors and lighted the fire and cooked the food, and gave the dog and cat some dinner, and took some herself and went to sleep.

No sooner had Surya Bai left the Rakshas's hut, than the young Rakshas returned and his mother said to him: "Alas, alas, my son, why did you not come sooner! Such a sweet little lamb has been here, and now we have lost her." Then she told him all about Surya Bai. "Which way did she go?" asked the young Rakshas, "only tell me that and I'll have her before morning." His mother told him how she had given Surya Bai the parched corn to scatter on the road; and when he heard that, he followed up the track and ran and ran and ran till he came to the foot of the tree. Looking up, he saw the nest high in the branches above him. Quick as thought, up he climbed and reached the great outer door; and he shook it and shook it but he could not get in for

Surya Bai had bolted it. Then he said: "Let me in, my child, let me in. I am the great Eagle, and I have come from very far and brought you many beautiful jewels; and here is a splendid diamond ring to fit your little finger." But Surya Bai did not hear him, for she was fast asleep.

He again tried to force open the door, but it was too strong for him. In his efforts, however, he had broken off one of his finger-nails (now the nail of a Rakshas is most poisonous), which he left sticking in the crack of the door when he went away.

Next morning, Surya Bai opened all the doors in order to look down on the world below; but when she came to the seventh door, a sharp thing, which was sticking in it, ran into her hand and immediately she fell down dead.

At that same moment the two poor old Eagles returned from their long twelve months' journey, bringing a beautiful diamond ring, which they had fetched for their little favourite from the Red Sea. There she lay on the threshold, beautiful as ever, but cold and dead. The Eagles could not bear the sight; so they placed the ring on her finger, and then, with loud cries, flew off to return no more.

But a little while afterward there chanced to come by a great Rajah who was out on a hunting expedition. He came with hawks and hounds and attend-

ants and horses, and pitched his camp under the tree in which the Eagle's nest was built. Then looking up, he saw, amongst the topmost branches, what appeared like a queer little house; and he sent some of his attendants to see what it was. They soon returned and told the Rajah that up in the tree was a curious thing like a cage, having seven iron doors, and that on the threshold of the first door lay a fair maiden, richly dressed; that she was dead, and that beside her stood a little dog and a little cat.

At this the Rajah commanded that they should be fetched down, and when he saw Surya Bai, he felt very sad to think that she was dead. And he took her hand to feel if it were already stiff; but all her limbs were supple, nor had she become cold, as the dead are cold; and, looking again at her hand, the Rajah saw that a sharp thing, like a long thorn, had run into the tender palm, almost far enough to pierce through to the back of her hand.

He pulled it out, and no sooner had he done so than Surya Bai opened her eyes and stood up, crying: "Where am I? and who are you? Is it a dream, or true?"

The Rajah answered: "It is all true, beautiful lady. I am the Rajah of a neighbouring land; pray tell me who are you?"

She replied: "I am an Eagle's child." But he

laughed. "Nay," he said, "that cannot be: you are some great Princess." "No," she answered, "I am no royal lady, what I say is true. I have lived all my life in this tree. I am only the Eagle's child." Then the Rajah said: "If you are not a Princess born, I will make you one; say only that you will be my Queen."

Surya Bai consented, and the Rajah took her to his kingdom and made her his Queen. But Surya Bai was not his only wife; and the first Ranee, his other wife, was both jealous and envious of her.

The Rajah gave Surya Bai many trustworthy attendants to guard her and be with her. One old woman who loved Surya Bai said to her: "Don't be too intimate with the first Ranee, dear lady, for she wishes you no good, and she has power to do you harm. Some day she may poison, or otherwise injure you." But Surya Bai answered her: "Nonsense! what is there to be alarmed about? Why cannot we both live happily together like two sisters?" Then the old woman replied: "Ah, dear lady, I pray my fears may prove folly." So Surya Bai often went to see the first Ranee, and the first Ranee also came often to see her.

One day they were standing in the palace court-yard near a tank, where the Rajah's people bathed, and the first Ranee said to Surya Bai: "What

pretty jewels you have, sister! Let me try them on for a minute and see how I look in them."

The old woman was standing beside Surya Bai and whispered to her: "Do not lend her your jewels." "Hush! you silly old woman," she answered, "what harm will it do?" and she gave the Ranee her jewels. Then the Ranee said: "How pretty all your things are! do you not think they look well even on me? Let us come down to the tank; it is as clear as glass, and we can see ourselves reflected in it and how these jewels will shine in the clear water!"

The old woman, hearing this, was much alarmed, and begged Surya Bai not to venture near the tank, but she said: "I bid you be silent, I will not distrust my sister," and she went down to the tank. Then, when no one was near and they were both leaning over looking at their reflections in the water the first Ranee pushed Surya Bai into the tank, who, sinking under the water, was drowned; and from the place where her body fell, there sprung up a bright golden sunflower.

The Rajah shortly afterwards inquired where Surya Bai was,—but she could not be found. Then, very angry, he went to the first Ranee and said: "Tell me where the child is? You have made away with her." But she answered "you do me wrong; I know nothing of her. Doubtless that old woman whom

you allowed to be always with her, has done her some harm." So the Rajah ordered the poor old woman to be thrown into prison.

He tried to forget Surya Bai and all her pretty ways, but it was no good. Wherever he went, he saw her face. He still listened for her voice. Every day he grew more miserable; he would not eat nor drink; and as for the other Ranee, he could not bear to speak to her. Everybody said: "He will surely die."

One day the Rajah wandered to the edge of the tank, and leaning over the parapet, looked into the water. Then he was surprised to see growing out of the tank close beside him, a stately golden flower; and as he watched it, the sunflower gently bent its head and leaned down towards him. The Rajah's heart was softened, and he kissed its leaves and murmured: "This flower reminds me of my lost wife. I love it, it is fair and gentle as she used to be." And every day he would go down to the tank and sit and watch the flower. When the Ranee heard this, she ordered her servants to dig up the sunflower and take it into the jungle and burn it. Next time the Rajah went to the tank he found his flower gone; and he was very grieved, but none dared say who had done it.

Then, in the jungle where the ashes of the sunflower

He kissed it's leaves

had been thrown, there sprung up a young mango tree—tall and straight, that grew so quickly and became such a beautiful tree, that it was the wonder of the whole country. At last, on its topmost bough, came one fair blossom; and the blossom fell and the little mango grew rosier and rosier and larger and larger till people flocked from far and near only to look at it. But none ventured to gather it, for it was to be kept for the Rajah.

Now one day, Surya Bai's mother, the poor Milkwoman, was returning homeward after her day's work, with the empty milk cans; and being very tired with her long walk to the bazaar, she lay down under the mango tree and fell asleep. Then, right into her largest milk can fell the wonderful mango!

When the poor woman awoke and saw what had happened, she was dreadfully frightened, and thought: "If any one sees me with this wonderful fruit, that all the Rajah's great people have been watching for so many, many weeks, they will never believe that I did not steal it, and I shall be put in prison. Yet it is no good leaving it here; besides, it fell off of itself into my milk can. I will take it home as secretly as possible and share it with my children." So the Milkwoman covered up the can in which the mango lay and took it quickly home, and placed it in the corner of the room piling over

to give my child up at your command? You are Rajah in your palace, but I am Rajah in my own house; and I won't give up my little daughter for any bidding of yours. Be off with you, or I'll pull out your beard." And so saying she seized a long stick and attacked the Rajah, calling out loudly to her husband and sons, who came running to her aid.

The Rajah seeing matters were against him, and having outridden his attendants, rode away and returned to the palace. However, he determined to sift the matter. First, he went to see Surya Bai's old attendant, who was still in prison. From her he learnt enough to make him believe she was entirely innocent of Surya Bai's death and to suspect the first Ranee of having caused it. He therefore ordered the old woman to be set at liberty and bade her prove her devotion to her long-lost mistress by going to the Milkwoman's house and bringing him as much information as possible about the family and particularly about the girl he had seen returning from the well.

So the old woman went to the Milkwoman's house and made friends with her. After a few days, the Milkwoman ceased to be suspicious of her and became quite cordial. Surya Bai's attendant then told how she had been the late Ranee's waiting-woman and how the Rajah had thrown her into prison on her mis-

tress's death; and in return for this intelligence, the Milkwoman told her how the wonderful mango had tumbled into her can as she slept under the tree, and how it had miraculously changed in the course of an hour into a beautiful little lady, and ended with the words: "I wonder why she should have chosen my poor house to live in instead of any one else's."

Then Surya Bai's attendant said: "Have you ever asked her her history? Perhaps she would not mind telling it to you now."

So the Milkwoman called the girl and as soon as the old attendant saw her, she knew it was none other than Surya Bai, and her heart jumped for joy; but she remained silent, wondering much, for she knew her mistress had been drowned in the tank.

The old Milkwoman turned to Surya Bai and said: "My child, you have lived long with us and have been a good daughter to me; but I have never asked you your history, because I thought it must be a sad one; but if you do not fear to tell it to me now, I should like to hear it."

Surya Bai answered: "Mother, you speak true; my history is sad. I believe my real mother was a poor Milkwoman like you, and that she took me with her one day when I was quite a little baby, as she was going to sell milk in the bazaar. But being tired with the long walk, she sat down to rest, and placed

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me also on the ground, when suddenly a great Eagle flew down and carried me away. The only father and mother I ever knew were the two great Eagles."

"Ah, my child! my child!" cried the Milkwoman, "I was that poor woman. The Eagles flew away with my eldest daughter when she was only a year old. Have I found you after these many years?"

Then she ran and called all her children and her husband to tell them the wonderful news, and there was great rejoicing. When they were a little calmer, Surya Bai's mother said: "Tell us, dear daughter, how your life has been spent since first we lost you." And Surya Bai went on:

"The old Eagles took me away to their home, and there I lived happily for many years. They loved to bring me all the beautiful things that they could find, and at last one day they both went to fetch me a diamond ring from the Red Sea; but while they were gone the fire went out in the nest; so I went to an old woman's hut and got her to give me some fire; and the next day (I don't know how it was), as I was opening the outer door of the cage, a sharp thing that was sticking in it, ran into my hand, and I fell down senseless. I don't know how long I lay there, but when I came to myself, I found the Eagles must have come back and thought me dead and gone away, for the diamond ring was on my little finger. A

great many people were watching over me, and amongst them was a Rajah, who asked me to go home with him and be his wife, and he brought me to this place and I was his Ranee. But his other wife, the first Ranee hated me, for she was jealous, and desired to kill me; and one day she pushed me into the tank, for I was young and foolish and would not listen to the warnings of my faithful old attendant, who begged me not to go near the place. Ah! if I had only listened to her words, I might have been happy still."

At these words, the old attendant, who had been sitting in the background, rushed forward and kissed Surya Bai's feet, crying: "Ah, my lady! my lady! have I found you at last!" And, without staying to hear more, she ran back to the Palace to tell the Rajah the glad news.

Then Surya Bai told her parents how she had not wholly died in the tank, but had become a sunflower; and how the first Ranee, seeing how fond the Rajah was of the plant, had it thrown away; and then how she had risen from the ashes of the sunflower in the form of a mango tree; and how when the tree blossomed all her spirit went into the little mango flower, and she ended by saying: "And when the flower became fruit, I know not by what irresistible impulse I was induced to throw

myself into your milk can. Mother, it was my destiny, and as soon as you took me into your house, I began to recover my human form."

"Why then," asked her brothers and sisters, "why do you not tell the Rajah that you are living, and that you are the Ranee Surya Bai?"

"Alas!" she answered, "I cannot do that. Who knows but that he might be influenced by the first Ranee and also desire my death. Let me rather be poor like you, but safe from danger."

Then her mother cried: "Oh, what a stupid woman I am! The Rajah came seeking you here one day, but I and your father and brothers drove him away, for we did not know you were indeed the lost Ranee."

As she spoke the sound of horses' hoofs was heard in the distance and the Rajah himself appeared, having heard the good news of Surya Bai being alive from her old attendant.

It is impossible to tell of the joy of the Rajah at finding his long-lost wife, but it was not greater than Surya Bai's at being restored to her husband.

Then the Rajah turned to the old Milkwoman and said: "Old woman, you did not speak the truth, for it was indeed my wife who was in your hut."

"Yes, Protector of the Poor," answered the old Milkwoman, "but it was also my daughter." Then

they told him how Surya Bai was the Milkwoman's child.

At hearing this, the Rajah commanded them all to return with him to the Palace. He gave Surya Bai's father a village and ennobled the family; and he said to Surya Bai's attendant: "For the good service you have done, you shall be palace housekeeper," and he gave her great riches, adding: "I can never repay the debt I owe you, nor make you sufficient amends for having unjustly thrown you into prison." She replied: "Sire, even in your anger you were temperate; if you had caused me to be put to death, as some would have done, none of this good might have come to you: it is yourself you have to thank."

The wicked first Ranee was cast into prison for the rest of her life; but Surya Bai and her husband lived happily all the rest of their days; and in memory of her adventures, he planted round their Palace a hedge of sunflowers and a grove of mango trees.

TOM THUMB

IN the merry days of good King Arthur, there lived in one of the countries of England a ploughman and his wife. They were poor, but as the husband was a strong workman, and his partner an able assistant in all matters pertaining to a farmhouse, the dairy and poultry, they managed to make a very good living, and would have been contented and happy, had Nature blessed them with any offspring. But although they had been married several years, no olive-branch had yet appeared, and the worthy couple sadly lamented their hard lot.

There lived at this period, at the court of Arthur, a celebrated conjuror and magician, whose name was Merlin, the astonishment of the whole world, for he knew the past, present and future, and nothing appeared impossible to him. Persons of all classes came to him for assistance and advice. Knowing this, the ploughman determined to consult him, and therefore went to court, and with tears in his eyes,

begged Merlin that he might have a child "even though it should be no bigger than his thumb."

Now Merlin had a strange knack of taking people exactly at their word, and granted the ploughman's request. What was the ploughman's astonishment when he reached home to find that his wife had given birth to a gentleman so tiny that it required strong eyesight to behold him. His growth was wonderful;

> "In four minutes he grew so fast,
> That he became as tall
> As was the ploughman's thumb in length,
> And so she did him call."

The christening of this little fellow was a matter of much ceremony, for the Fairy Queen, attended by all her company of Elves was present, and he formally received the name of Tom Thumb. She gave him a choice suit of clothes. His hat was made of a beautiful oak leaf, his shirt of a fine spider's web, and his hose and doublet of fine thistle-down. His stockings were made of the rind of a delicate apple, and the garters were two of the finest little hairs that one can imagine, plucked from his mother's eyebrows. Shoes of the skin of a little mouse, "and tanned most curiously," completed his fairy-like adornment.

Tom was an object of astonishment and ridicule amongst the other children of the village, but they

soon discovered that, notwithstanding his diminutive size, he was more than a match for them. It was a matter of very little consequence to Tom whether he lost or won, for if he found his stock of counters or cherry stones run low, he soon crept into the pockets of his companions and replenished his store. It happened one day that he was found out and Tom was punished by being shut up in a pin-box. The fairy boy was greatly annoyed at his imprisonment, but the next day he revenged himself as follows: he hung a row of glasses on a sunbeam, and his companions, thinking they could do the same and forgetting that they did not possess Tom's fairy gifts, broke the glasses and were, in consequence, severely whipped, whilst Tom, overjoyed at their misfortune, laughed till the tears ran down his face.

The boys were so angry about this trick that Tom had played upon them, that his mother was afraid to trust him any longer in their company. So she kept him at home, and made him help her in any light work suitable for so small a child. One day, while she was making a batter-pudding Tom stood on the edge of a bowl, with a lighted candle in his hand, so that she might see that it was properly made. Unfortunately, however, when her back was turned, Tom accidentally fell into the bowl, and his mother not missing him, stirred him up in the pud-

ding "instead of minced fat," and put the pudding in the kettle with Tom in it. The poor woman paid dearly for her mistake, for Tom had no sooner felt the warm water, than he danced about like mad, and the pudding jumped about till she was nearly frightened out of her wits, and was glad to give it to a tinker who happened to be passing that way. He was thankful for this present, but his joy did not last long. As he was going over a stile, he happened to sneeze very hard, and Tom, who had up to this time, remained silent, called out: "Hello Pickens!" which so terrified the tinker that he threw the pudding into the field, and scampered away as fast as he could go. The pudding fell to pieces, naturally enough, and Tom, crawling out, ran home to his mother, who was greatly worried that he could not be found.

A few days after this adventure, Tom accompanied his mother when she went into the fields to milk the cows, and for fear that he should be blown away by the wind, she tied him to a thistle with a small piece of thread. While he was there a cow came and swallowed him. The cow, however, soon got tired of him, for Tom kicked and scratched till she was nearly mad, and finally tumbled him out of her mouth, when he was caught by his mother and carried safely home.

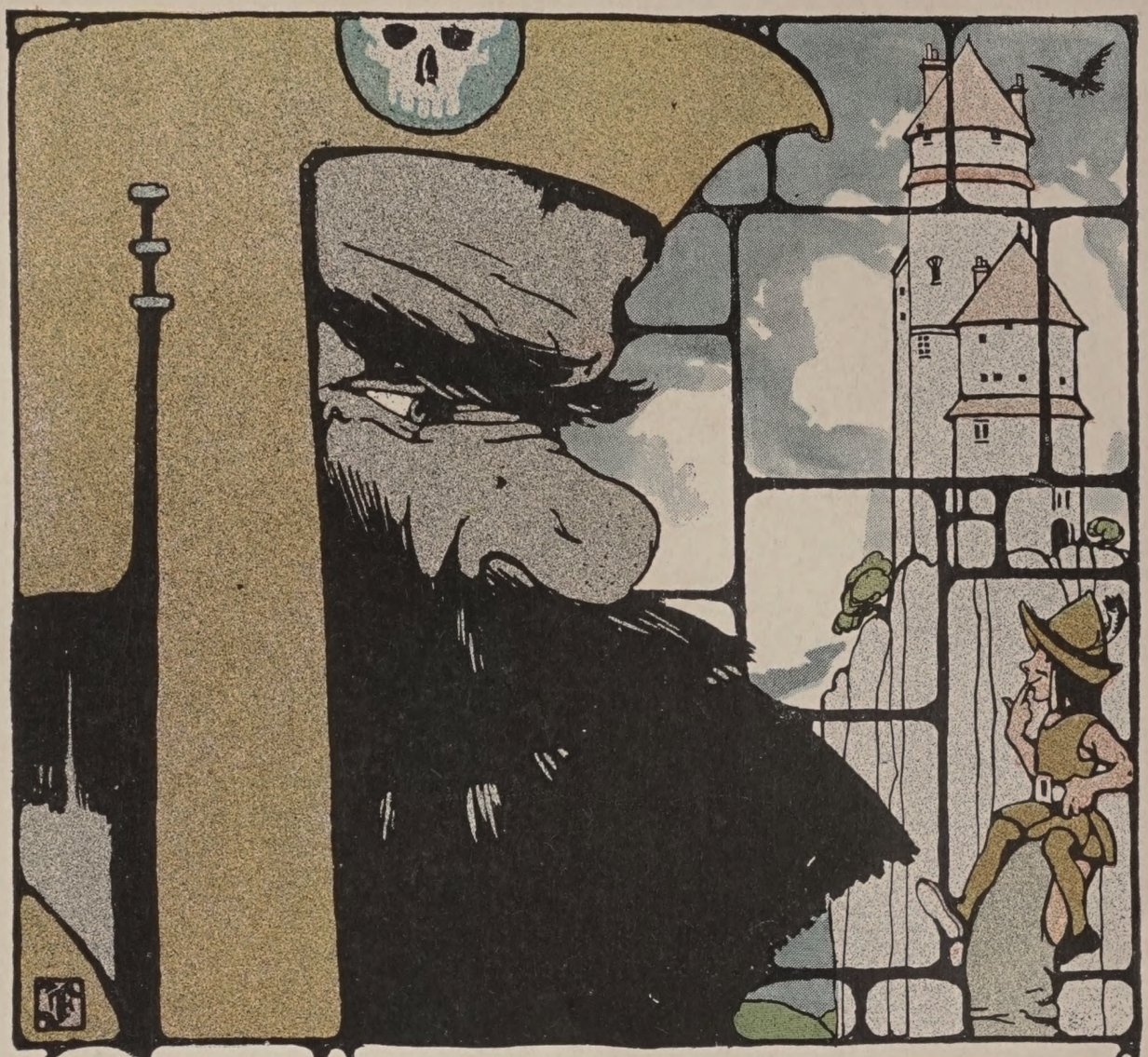
A succession of untoward accidents followed. One

day, Tom's father took him to the fields when he went to plough, and gave him a "whip made of a barley straw," to drive the oxen with, but the dwarf was soon lost in a furrow. While he was there a great raven came and carried him an immense distance to the top of a giant's castle. The giant swallowed him up, but he made such a disturbance when he got inside, that the monster was soon glad to get rid of him, and threw the mischievous little imp full three miles into the sea.

Happily he was not drowned, for he had scarcely reached the water before he was swallowed by a huge fish. This was soon caught and carried to King Arthur by the fisherman for a New Year's gift. Tom was discovered and King Arthur adopted him as his dwarf:

"Long time he lived in jollity,
Beloved of the court,
And none like Tom was so esteem'd
Amongst the better sort."

The Queen was delighted with the little dwarf, and made him dance a gaillard on her left hand. The performance was so satisfactory that King Arthur gave him a ring, which he wore about his middle like a girdle; and he literally "crept up the royal sleeve," requesting leave to visit his parents and take them as much money as he could carry:



Tom Thumb and the Giant

"And so away goes lusty Tom
With threepence at his back,
A heavy burden, which did make,
His very bones to crack."

Tom remained three days with the old couple, and feasted upon a hazelnut so extravagantly that he grew ill. King Arthur was so anxious for the return of his dwarf, that his mother sent him back to the court. He was received by the King with every demonstration of affection and delight, and tournaments were immediately proclaimed.

Thus he at tilt and tournament
Was entertained so,
That all the rest of Arthur's Knights
Did him much pleasure show.

And good Sir Launcelot du Lake,
Sir Tristram and Sir Guy,
Yet none compared to brave Tom Thumb
In acts of chivalry.

Tom, however, paid dearly for his victories, for the exertions he made on this celebrated occasion threw him into an illness which finally caused his death. But the hero was carried away by his godmother, the Fairy Queen, into Fairyland; and after the lapse of two hundred years, he was allowed to return to earth and again amuse men by his comical adventures.

PRINCE AHMED AND THE FAIRY PARI BANOU

HERE was a Sultan who had peaceably filled the throne of India many years and had the satisfaction in his old age to have three sons, the worthy imitators of his virtues, who, with the Princess, his niece, were the ornaments of his court. The eldest of the Princes was called Houssain, the second Ali, the youngest Ahmed, and the Princess, his niece, Nouronnihar.[1]

The Sultan, her uncle, proposed to marry her with some neighbouring Prince when he perceived that his sons loved her passionately. He spoke to each of them apart; and after having remonstrated on the impossibility of one Princess being the wife of three persons, he did all he could to persuade them to abide by a declaration of the Princess in favour of one of them, or to desist from their pretensions. But as he found them obstinate, he sent for them all together,

[1] Daylight.

and said to them: "Children since for your good and quiet I have not been able to persuade you no longer to aspire to marry the Princess your cousin, and as I have no inclination to make use of my authority, to give her to one preferable before the other two, I fancy I have thought of a proper expedient which will please you all and preserve the union among you, if you will but hear me and follow my advice. I think it would not be amiss if you travelled separately into different countries, so that you might not meet each other; and as you know I am very curious, and delight in everything that is rare and singular, I promise my niece in marriage to him that shall bring me the most extraordinary rarity; and for the expense of travelling, I will give each of you a sum agreeable to your birth and the purchase of the rarity you shall go in search after."

As the three Princes were always submissive and obedient to the Sultan's will, and each flattered himself fortune might prove favourable to him and give him the Princess Nouronnihar, they all consented. The Sultan gave them the money he promised them; and that very day they issued orders for the preparations for their travels, and took leave of the Sultan that they might be ready to set out early next morning. They went out of the same gate of the city, each dressed like a merchant, attended by a

trusty officer, dressed like a slave, and all well mounted and equipped. They went the first day's journey together, and slept at the first inn where the road divided into three different tracks. At night, when they were at supper together, they all agreed to travel for a year and to make that inn their rendezvous, and that the first that came should wait for the others. The next morning by break of day after they had embraced, they mounted their horses, and took each a different road.

Prince Houssain, who had heard wonders of the extent, strength, riches and splendour of the Kingdom of Bisnagar, bent his course towards the Indian coast; and, after three months' travelling, joining himself to different caravans, sometimes over deserts and barren mountains, and sometimes through populous and fertile countries, arrived at Bisnagar, the capital of the kingdom of that name.

The multitude of the shops stocked with all kinds of merchandise, such as the finest linens from India, silks and brocades from Persia and China, porcelain from Japan and China, and foot carpets of all sizes surprised him so much that he knew not how to believe his own eyes; but when he came to the shops of the goldsmiths and jewellers, he was in a kind of ecstacy to behold such prodigious quantities of wrought gold and silver, and was dazzled by the

lustre of the pearls, diamonds, rubies, emeralds and other precious stones exposed for sale. After Prince Houssain had gone through the streets he was very tired, which a merchant perceiving, invited him to sit down in his shop. He had not been seated long before he saw a crier pass by with a piece of carpet on his arm, about six feet square, and cry it at thirty purses. The Prince called to the crier and asked to see the carpeting, which seemed to him to be valued at an exorbitant price, not only for the size of it, but the meanness of the stuff. When he had examined it well, he told the crier that he could not comprehend how so small a piece of carpeting, and of so indifferent an appearance, could be set at so high a price.

The crier, who took him for a merchant, replied: "Sir, if the price seems so extravagant to you, your amazement will be greater when I tell you I have orders to raise it to forty purses, and not to part with it under." "Certainly," answered Prince Houssain, "it must have something very extraordinary in it which I know nothing of." "You have guessed it sir," replied the crier, "and will own it when you come to know that whoever sits on this piece of carpeting may be transported in an instant wherever he desires to be, without being stopped by any obstacle."

The Prince of the Indies, considering that the motive of his travel was to carry home to the Sultan, his father, some singular rarity, thought he could not meet with any which would give him more satisfaction.

On the credit of the crier, the Prince accepted the conditions and concluded the bargain; and having obtained the master's leave, they went into his back shop. They both sat down on the carpeting, and as soon as the Prince formed his wish to be transported into his appartment at the Khan, he presently found himself and the crier there in the same situation; and as he wanted not a more sufficient proof of the virtue of the carpeting, he counted to the crier forty purses of gold and gave him twenty pieces for himself.

Prince Houssain might have made a longer stay in the kingdom and court of Bisnagar, till the last day of the year, whereon he and his brothers had appointed to meet. But he was so well satisfied with what he had seen, and his thoughts ran so much upon the object of his love, that after his good success in meeting with this carpeting, the beauty and charms of the Princess Nouronnihar increased every day the violence of his passion, and he fancied he should be the more easy and happy the nearer he was to her. After he had satisfied the master of the Khan and told him when he might come for the key,

without telling him how he should go, he shut the door, put the key on the outside, and spreading the carpeting, he and the officer he had brought with him sat down on it, and as soon as he had formed his wish, were transported to the inn at which he and his brothers were to meet, and where he passed for a merchant till they came.

Prince Ali, who designed to travel into Persia, after four months' travelling, arrived at Schiraz, which was then the capital of Persia; and having on the way contracted a friendship with some merchants, passed for a jeweller, and lodged in the same Khan with them.

The first morning, after he had dressed himself, Prince Ali took a walk into that quarter of the town where they sold precious stones, gold and silver works, brocades, silks, fine linens, and other choice and valuable merchandise, and which at Schiraz was called the bezestein. It was a spacious and well built place, arched over and the arches supported by large pillars; round which, as well as along the walks, within and without, were shops. Prince Ali rambled through the bezestein, and with admiration judged of the riches of the place by the prodigious quantities of the most precious merchandise there exposed.

But among all the criers who passed backwards

and forwards with several sorts of goods, he was not a little surprised to see one who held in his hand an ivory tube, about a foot long and about an inch thick, and cried it at thirty purses. At first he thought the crier mad and said to the merchant who stood at the door: "Pray, sir, is not that man mad?" "Indeed, sir," answered the merchant, "he was in his right mind yesterday; and I can assure you he is one of the ablest criers we have. If he cries the ivory tube at thirty purses, it must be worth as much or more, on some account or other which does not appear. He will come by presently and we will call him, and you shall satisfy yourself: in the meantime, sit down on my sofa and rest."

Prince Ali accepted the merchant's obliging offer and presently the crier passed by. The merchant called him by his name, and pointing to the Prince, said: "Tell that gentleman, who asked me if you were in your right senses, what you mean by crying that ivory tube, which seems not to be worth much, at thirty purses."

The crier presenting himself to Prince Ali, said: "First, sir, observe that this tube is furnished with a glass at both ends; and consider that by looking through each of them, you see whatever object you wish to behold." "I am," said the Prince, "ready to make you all proper reparation for the scandal I

have thrown on you, if you will make the truth of what you advance appear."

And, holding the ivory tube in his hand, he looked through, wishing, at the same time, to see the sultan, his father, whom he immediately beheld in perfect health, sitting on his throne in the midst of the council. Afterwards, as there was nothing else so dear to him in the world as the Princess Nouronnihar, he wished to see her; and saw her sitting at her toilet, and in a pleasant humour with her women about her.

Prince Ali wanted no other proof to persuade him that this tube was the most valuable thing, not only in the city of Schiraz, but in all the world; and believed that if he should neglect to purchase it, he should never meet again with such another rarity. He said to the crier: "I am very sorry that I should have entertained so bad an opinion of you, but hope to make you amends by buying the tube, for I should be sorry if anybody else has it: so tell me the lowest price the seller has fixed upon it; and do not give yourself any further trouble to hawk it about, but go with me, and I will pay you the money." The crier assured him that his last orders were to take no less than forty purses. The Prince believed him, took him with him to the Khan where he lodged, paid him the money and received the tube.

Prince Ali, overjoyed at his bargain, persuaded himself that, as his brothers would not be able to meet with anything so rare and admirable, the Princess Nouronnihar would be his. He thought now of visiting the court of Persia incognito till the caravan with which he came returned to the Indies. The Prince joined it and arrived happily without any accidents at the place of rendezvous, where he found Prince Houssain, and both waited for Prince Ahmed.

Prince Ahmed took the road to Samarcand; and the next day after his arrival there, went, as his brothers had done, to the bezestein; where he had not walked long before he heard a crier, who had an artificial apple in his hand, cry it at five-and-thirty purses. He stopped the crier and said: "Let me see that apple, and tell me what virtue or extraordinary property it has, to be valued at so high a rate." "Sir," said the crier, giving it into his hand, "if you look at the outside of the apple, it is very inconsiderable; but if you consider its properties, virtues, and the great use and benefit it is of to mankind, you will say it is invaluable, and it is certain that he who possesses it, is master of a great treasure. It cures all sick persons of the most mortal diseases, and if the patient is dying, it will restore him immediately to perfect health; and this is done after the

easiest manner in the world, merely by the patient's smelling the apple."

While the crier was telling Prince Ahmed the virtues of the artificial apple, a great many persons came about them, and confirmed what he said; and one among the rest said he had a friend dangerously ill, which was a favourable opportunity to show Prince Ahmed the experiment. Upon which Prince Ahmed told the crier he would give him forty purses if he cured the sick person by smelling it. In short, the experiment succeeded; and the Prince, after he had counted out to the crier forty purses, and the other had delivered the apple to him, waited with the greatest impatience for the first caravan that should return to the Indies. In the meantime, he saw all that was curious in and about Samarcand.

At last, Prince Ahmed joined himself to the first caravan that returned to the Indies, and arrived in perfect health at the inn where Prince Houssain and Prince Ali waited for him.

When Prince Ahmed came to his brothers, and they had embraced with tenderness, Prince Houssain, as the elder brother, assumed the discourse, and said: "Brothers, we shall have time enough hereafter to entertain ourselves with the particulars of our travels: let us come to that which is of the greatest importance for us to know. Let us not conceal from

each other the curiosities we have brought home, but show them, that we may do ourselves justice beforehand, and see to which of us the Sultan, our father, may give the preference. To set the example, I will tell you that the rarity which I have brought from my travels to the Kingdom of Bisnagar, is the carpeting on which I sit, which looks but ordinary and makes no show; but when I have declared its virtues to you, you will be struck with admiration, and will confess you never heard of anything like it. In short, whoever sits on it, as we do, and desires to be transported to any place, be it ever so far off, is immediately carried thither. I made the experiment myself before I paid down the forty purses, which I most readily gave for it; and when I had fully satisfied my curiosity at the court of Bisnagar and had a mind to return, I made use of no other carriage than this wonderful carpet for myself and servant. I will show you the experiment whenever you please. You shall tell me whether what you have brought is to be compared with this carpet."

"I must own, brother, that your carpet is one of the most surprising things imaginable; but you must allow that there may be other things, I will not say more, but at least as wonderful, in another way. And to convince you that there are, here is an ivory tube,

which appears to the eye no more a rarity than your carpet, and yet merits great attention. It cost me as much and I am as well satisfied with my purchase as you can be with yours; and you will be so just as to own that I have not been cheated, when you know by experience that by looking at one end you see whatever object you wish to behold. I would not have you take my word," added Prince Ali, presenting the tube to him, " take it, make trial of it yourself."

Prince Houssain took the ivory tube from Prince Ali, and clapped that end to his eye which Prince Ali showed him, with an intention to see the Princess Nouronnihar, and to know how she did. Prince Ali and Prince Ahmed were extremely surprised to see his countenance change on a sudden in such a manner as expressed an extraordinary surprise and affliction. Prince Houssain cried out: " Alas, Princes, to what purpose have we undertaken these long and fatiguing journeys when in a few moments the charming Nouronnihar will breathe her last. I saw her in her bed, surrounded by her women and eunuchs, who were all in tears. Take the tube; behold for yourselves the miserable state she is in, and mingle your tears with mine."

When Prince Ali saw that the Princess's end was so near, he said: " Princes, the Princess Nouron-

nihar is indeed at death's door; but provided we make haste we may preserve her life." Then he took the artificial apple out of his bosom and said: "This apple cost me as much and more than either the carpet or tube. The opportunity which now presents itself to show you its wonderful virtue makes me not regret the forty purses I gave for it. But, not to keep you longer in suspense, it has the virtue if a sick person smells it, though in the last agonies, to restore him to perfect health. I have made the experiment, and can show you its wonderful effect on the person of Princess Nouronnihar, if we make haste."

"If that is all," replied Prince Houssain, "we cannot make more despatch than by transporting ourselves instantly into her chamber by means of my carpet. Come, lose no time; sit down on it by me; it is large enough to hold all three; but first let us order our servants to join us at the palace."

As their interest was the same, they all three framed the same wish, and were transported into the Princess Nouronnihar's chamber. Prince Ahmed rose off the tapestry as did the others, and went to the bedside and put the apple under her nose. Some moments after, the Princess opened her eyes and turned her head from one side to another, looking at the persons who stood beside her; she then rose up

in her bed and asked to be dressed as if she had just awaked out of a sound sleep.

Whilst the Princess was dressing, the Princes went to throw themselves at the Sultan's feet and pay their respects. The Sultan received and embraced them with the greatest joy, both for their return and the wonderful recovery of the Princess his niece, whom he loved as if she had been his own daughter. After the usual compliments, the Princes presented each the rarity which he had brought, Prince Houssain his carpet; Prince Ali, his ivory tube; and Prince Ahmed, his artificial apple. After each had commended his present, when they put it into the Sultan's hands, they begged him to pronounce their fate, and declare to which of them he would give the Princess Nouronnihar for a wife, according to his promise.

The Sultan of the Indies remained some time silent, as if he was thinking on what answer he should make. At last he said in terms full of wisdom: "I would declare for one of you, my children, with a great deal of pleasure, if I could do it with justice; but consider whether I can. It is true, Prince Ahmed, the Princess, my niece, is obliged to your artificial apple for her cure; but let me ask you, whether you could have been so serviceable to her, if you had not known by Prince Ali's tube the danger she was in,

and if Prince Houssain's carpet had not brought you to her so soon? Your tube, Prince Ali, informed you and your brothers that you were likely to lose the Princess, your cousin, and so far she is greatly obliged to you. You must also grant that that knowledge would have been of no service without the artificial apple and the carpet.

"And for you, Prince Houssain, the Princess would be very ungrateful, if she should not show her sense of the serviceableness of your carpet, but it would have been of little use, if you had not been acquainted with the Princess's illness by Prince Ali's tube, and Prince Ahmed had not applied his artificial apple. Therefore, as neither the carpet, the ivory tube, nor the artificial apple has the least preference one before the other, I cannot grant the Princess to any one of you. I must have recourse to other means to determine the choice I ought to make. Go, and get, each of you, a bow and arrow, and repair to the great plain out of the city where the horses are exercised. I will soon come to you; and I declare I will give the Princess Nouronnihar to him that shoots the farthest. I do not forget, however, to thank you for the presents you have brought me. I have a great many rarities in my closet already, but nothing that comes up to the singularity of the carpet, the ivory tube, and the artificial apple."

The three Princes had nothing to say against the decision of the Sultan. They each provided themselves with a bow and arrow and went to the plain appointed, followed by a great concourse of people. The Sultan did not make them wait long; and as soon as he arrived, Prince Houssain took his bow and arrow and shot first. Prince Ali shot next, and much beyond him; and Prince Ahmed, last of all.

It so happened that nobody could see where Prince Ahmed's arrow fell, and though it was believed that he shot the farthest, it was necessary that his arrow should be found to make the matter more certain; and, notwithstanding his remonstrances, the Sultan determined in favour of Prince Ali, and gave orders for the preparations to be made for the nuptials, which were celebrated a few days after with great magnificence.

Prince Houssain's grief was so violent that he left the court and renounced all right of succession to the crown and put himself under the guidance of a famous sheik in an agreeable solitude. Prince Ahmed did not assist at the nuptials, but resolved to search after his arrow. He went so far that at last he began to think his labour was in vain; yet he could not help going forward till he came to some steep craggy rocks in a barren country about four leagues from whence he had set out.

When Prince Ahmed came near these rocks he perceived an arrow which he was greatly astonished to find was the same that he had shot. Certainly, said he to himself, neither I nor any man living could shoot an arrow so far. There must be some mystery in this, and it may be to my advantage. Perhaps fortune, to make amends for depriving me of what I thought the greatest happiness of my life, may have reserved a greater blessing for my comfort.

The Prince entered one of the cavities, and looking about cast his eye on an iron door. He feared it was fastened, but pushing against it, it opened and discovered an easy descent, which he walked down with his arrow in his hand. At first, he thought he was going into a dark place, but presently, a quite different light succeeded that which he came out of; and entering into a spacious square at about fifty or sixty paces distant, he perceived a magnificent palace; at the same time a lady of majestic port and air, and of a beauty to which the richness of her clothes and the jewels which adorned her person added no advantage, advanced as far as the porch, attended by a troop of ladies. Raising her voice, she said: "Come near, Prince Ahmed, you are welcome."

It was no small surprise to the Prince to hear himself named in a palace he had never heard of, though

so near his father's capital, and he could not comprehend how he should be known to a lady who was a stranger to him. At last, he returned the lady's compliment by throwing himself at her feet, and rising up again said to her: "Madam, I return you a thousand thanks for your welcome to a place where I had reason to believe my curiosity had made me penetrate too far. But, Madam, may I, without being guilty of rudeness, presume to ask you by what adventure you know me? And that you, who live in the same neighbourhood with me, should be unknown to me?"

"Prince," said the lady, "let us go into the hall; there I will gratify you in your request."

The lady then led Prince Ahmed into the hall, the noble structure of which and the gold and azure which embellished the dome, and the inestimable richness of the furniture, appeared so great a novelty to him, that he exclaimed he had never beheld anything like it. "I can assure you," replied the lady, "that this is but a small part of my palace, and you will say so when you have seen all my apartments." Then she sat down on the sofa, and when the Prince at her entreaty had seated himself by her, she said: "You are surprised, you say, that I should know you, and not be known by you; but you will be no longer surprised when I inform you who I am.

You cannot be ignorant that your religion teaches you to believe that the world is inhabited by genii as well as men: I am the daughter of one of the most powerful and distinguished of these genii and my name is Pari Banou; therefore you ought not to wonder that I know you. I am no stranger to your loves or your travels, of which I could tell you all the circumstances, since it was I myself who exposed to sale the artificial apple which you bought at Samarcand, the carpet which Prince Houssain met with at Bisnagar, and the tube which Prince Ali brought from Shiraz. The only thing I have to add is, that you seemed to me worthy of a more happy fate than that of possessing the Princess Nouronnihar; and that you might attain to it, I was present when you drew your arrow, and gave it the necessary motion to make it strike against the rocks near which you found it. It is in your power to avail yourself of the favourable opportunity which it presents to make you happy."

As the fairy Pari Banou pronounced these last words with a different tone and looked at the same time tenderly upon Prince Ahmed with downcast eyes and a modest blush upon her cheeks, it was not difficult for the Prince to comprehend what happiness she meant. He presently considered that the Princess Nouronnihar could never be his and that

the fairy Pari Banou excelled her in beauty, attractions, agreeableness, transcendent wit and immense riches. He blessed the moment that he thought of seeking after his arrow a second time. "Madam," he replied, "should I, all my life have the happiness of being your slave and the admirer of the many charms which ravish my soul, I should think myself the happiest of men."

"Prince," answered the fairy, "it is not as a slave that I would admit you into my court, but as master of my person and all that belongs to me, by pledging your faith to me, and taking me to be your wife."

Prince Ahmed kissed her hand a thousand times and kept it fast locked in his. "Well, Prince Ahmed," said she, "will you not pledge your faith to me, as I do mine to you?" "Yes, Madam," replied the Prince, in an ecstasy of joy, "what can I do better and with greater pleasure? Yes, my Sultaness, my Queen, I will give it to you with my heart, without the least reserve." "Then," said the fairy, "you are my husband and I am your wife. Our marriages are contracted with no other ceremonies, and yet are more firm and indissoluble than those among men with all their formalities. But as I suppose," pursued she, "that you have eaten nothing to-day, a slight repast shall be served up for you while prep-

arations are making for our nuptial feast this evening, and then I will show you the apartments of my palace, and you shall judge if this hall is the smallest part of it."

The nuptial feast was continued the next day; or rather the days following the celebration were a continual feast; which the fairy Pari Banou diversified by new dishes, new meats, new concerts, new dances, new shows and new diversions, which were all so extraordinary, that Prince Ahmed, if he had lived a thousand years among men could not have imagined anything finer.

At the end of six months, Prince Ahmed, who always loved and honoured his father, desired the fairy to give him leave to visit him in person; but the fairy, alarmed, feared it was only an excuse to leave her. She said to him: "Is it possible that you no longer love one who is so passionately fond of you?"

"My Queen," replied the Prince, "if you are offended at the leave I ask, I entreat you to forgive me."

Prince Ahmed, who loved her in his heart as much as he had assured her by these words, no longer insisted on the leave he had asked; and the fairy expressed her satisfaction thereat. But he could not abandon the design he had of visiting the Sultan, and so often entertained the fairy Pari Banou with

talking about his father, without speaking any more of his desire to see him that one day she said to him: "Prince, the leave you have asked me to go and see the Sultan your father gave me a fear that it was a pretext to leave me, and that was my sole motive for refusing you; but now I am so fully convinced by your actions and words that I can depend upon the constancy of your love, that I change my resolution and grant you leave, upon condition that you will swear to me that your absence shall not be long. Go when you please, but first do not take it amiss that I give you some advice how you shall behave yourself where you are going. First, I do not think it proper for you to tell the Sultan, your father, of our marriage, nor of my quality, nor the place where you are settled. Beg of him to be satisfied with knowing you are happy, and let him know that the sole end of your visit is to make him easy about your fate."

She appointed twenty horsemen to attend him and his horse, which was most finely caparisoned, was as beautiful a creature as any in the stables of the Sultan of the Indies.

As it was not a great way to his father's capital, Prince Ahmed soon arrived there. The people received him with acclamations of joy and followed him in crowds to the Sultan's apartments. The

Sultan embraced him with great joy, complaining at the same time, with a fatherly tenderness, of the affliction his long absence had been to him.

"Sir," said Prince Ahmed, "your Majesty knows, that when I shot my arrow, the most extraordinary thing that ever befell anybody happened to me, that in so large and level a plain, it should not be possible to find my arrow. To satisfy my perplexed mind, I gave my attendants the slip and returned alone to look for my arrow. After having gone four leagues to that part of the plain where it is bounded by rocks, I perceived an arrow. I ran and took it up and knew it to be the same which I had shot. I never doubted but there was a mystery in it to my advantage, and which I found out without going from the spot. But as to this mystery, I beg your Majesty will not take it ill that I am silent, and that you will be satisfied to learn from my own mouth that I am happy and content with my fate. In the midst of all my happiness the only thing that troubled me was that your Majesty knew not what was become of me. I thought it my duty to satisfy you on this point. This was the only motive which brought me hither; the only favour I ask your Majesty is to give me leave to come often and pay my respects."

The Sultan of the Indies said: "Son, I penetrate no farther into your secrets. I can only tell you

that you could not do me a greater pleasure than to come, and, by your presence, restore to me the joy I have not felt for a long time."

Prince Ahmed stayed but three days at his father's court and the fourth returned to the fairy Pari Banou, who received him with the greater joy, as she did not expect him so soon.

Prince Ahmed went the next month, but more magnificently mounted, equipped, and dressed, and was received by the Sultan with the same joy. For several months he constantly paid him visits, and always with a richer and more brilliant equipage.

At last, some viziers abused the liberty the Sultan gave them of speaking to him, to make him jealous of his son. They represented to him that it was but common prudence to know where the Prince had retired, and that it was to be feared he might stir up the people's favour and dethrone him.

The Sultan of the Indies replied: "You are mistaken; my son loves me, and I am the more assured of his tenderness and fidelity, as I have given him no reason to feel differently."

"But, Sir," one of the favourites continued, "it may be that these suspicions are well grounded. Every time that Prince Ahmed comes, he and his attendants are fresh and their clothes and their horses' housings are clean and bright, and their

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horses look as if they had only been walked out. These are sufficient signs that Prince Ahmed does not come a great way."

"Be it as it will," replied the Sultan, "but I do not believe my son Ahmed is so wicked as you would persuade me; however, I am obliged to you for your good advice."

He resolved to have Prince Ahmed watched, unknown to his grand vizier, and for this end sent for a female magician, who was introduced by a private door into his closet.

"Prince Ahmed comes to my court," said he, "every month; but I cannot learn from him where he resides, and I did not wish to force his secret out of him. I believe that you are capable of satisfying my curiosity, without letting him, or any of the court, know anything of the matter. You know that at this present time he is here with me, and is used to go away without taking leave of me, or any of my court. Go immediately upon the road and find out where he retires and bring me word."

The magician, knowing the place where Prince Ahmed found his arrow, went thither and hid herself near the rocks, so that nobody could see her. The next morning Prince Ahmed set out by daybreak, without taking leave of the Sultan, or any of his court. The magician followed him with her eyes, till

on a sudden she lost sight of him and his attendants. She judged that the Prince had retired into some cavern, or into some place underground, the abode of genii, or fairies. Notwithstanding all her diligence she could perceive no opening, nor the iron gate which Prince Ahmed discovered; for this door was to be seen by and opened to none but men, and only to such men whose presence was agreeable to the fairy Pari Banou, and not at all to women.

The magician was obliged to be satisfied with the discovery she had made, and returned to give the Sultan an account of what she had done.

As Prince Ahmed never failed to visit the Sultan once a month, the magician knowing the time, went to the rock and waited until Prince Ahmed came forth from the iron gate. He passed by the magician, whom he did not know, and hearing her complaining as if she were in great pain, he pitied her, turned his horse about and went to her, asking what he could do to relieve her.

The artful sorceress answered in broken words and sighs that she was going to the city, but was taken with so violent a fever that she was forced to lie down where he saw her.

"Good woman," said Prince Ahmed, "you are not so far from help as you imagine; get up and let one of my people take you behind him."

Two of the Prince's attendants helped her up and set her behind another. They mounted their horses again, and followed the Prince, who turned back to the iron gate. When he came into the court of the fairy's palace, he sent to tell her he wanted to speak with her.

The fairy Pari Banou came out with all haste, not knowing what made Prince Ahmed return so soon; who said: "My Princess, I desire you would have compassion on this good woman."

The fairy Pari Banou ordered two of her women to carry her into an apartment of the palace and care for her; but as they executed the fairy's commands, she whispered: "Prince, I commend your compassion, which is worthy of you and your birth. I take great pleasure in gratifying your good intention; but give me leave to tell you, I am afraid it will be but ill rewarded. This woman is not so sick as she pretends to be; and I am very much mistaken if she is not sent hither on purpose to occasion you great trouble. But do not be concerned; I will deliver you out of all snares that shall be laid for you. Go and pursue your journey."

"My Princess," replied Prince Ahmed, "as I do not remember I ever did anybody an injury, I cannot believe anybody can have a thought of doing me one." So saying, he took leave of the fairy and

soon arrived at his father's capital, where he was received as usual.

In the meantime, the two women had carried the magician into a fine apartment where they made her drink a potion which soon cured her; then they conducted her into a magnificent hall where Pari Banou was seated on a throne of massy gold, enriched with diamonds, rubies, and pearls of an extraordinary size, and attended on each hand by a great number of beautiful fairies, all richly dressed. At the sight of so much majesty, the magician was so dazzled that she prostrated herself before the throne. Then Pari Banou said to her: "Good woman, I am glad I had an opportunity to oblige you, and to see you are able to pursue your journey: I will not detain you."

The old sorceress took her leave and was conducted by the two fairies through all the apartments that were shown Prince Ahmed on his arrival, and finally to the iron gate, where they wished her a good journey. The magician turned back to observe the door but all in vain; for it was invisible.

When she came to the capital, she went to the private door of the palace and related to the Sultan how she pretended to be sick, how Prince Ahmed in compassion had her carried into a subterranean abode and recommended her himself to a fairy of incom-

parable beauty. She gave a particular account of the majesty of the fairy whose riches exceeded all the riches of the kingdom of the Indies.

"Sire, I am persuaded," she added, "the zeal of your counsellors for your Majesty's interest makes them propose arresting Prince Ahmed; but they will not take it amiss if I offer to your and their consideration, that if you arrest the Prince, you must also detain his retinue. They are all genii. Will they not disappear and transport themselves instantly to the fairy and give her an account of the insult offered to her husband? And can it be supposed she will let it go unrevenged? If your Majesty has any confidence in my advice, as genii and fairies can do things impracticable to men, you will pique Prince Ahmed's honour and engage him, by means of the fairy to procure certain advantages. For example, every time your Majesty takes the field, you are obliged to be at a great expense, not only in pavilions and tents for yourselves and army, but likewise in mules and camels, and other beasts of burden to carry their baggage. Might not you engage him to use his interest with the fairy to procure you a tent which might be carried in a man's hand, and which should be so large as to shelter your whole army? If the Prince brings such a tent, you may make a great many other demands of the same nature, so

that at last he may sink under the difficulties and the impossibility of executing them."

The Sultan asked his favourites if they had anything better to propose; and, finding them silent, determined to follow the magician's advice.

The next day the Sultan said to Prince Ahmed: "Son, when you came and dispelled those clouds of melancholy which your long absence had brought upon me, you made the place you had chosen for your retreat a mystery to me. I know not what reason you had thus to treat a father who ever did and still continues to express what interest he takes in your happiness. I know your good fortune. I rejoice with you, and very much approve of your conduct in marrying a fairy so worthy of your love, and so rich and powerful, as I am informed. You are not insensible at what a great expense, not to say trouble, to my generals, officers and myself, every time I take the field, they provide tents and pavilions, and mules and camels, and other beasts of burden, to carry them. If you consider the pleasure you would do me I am persuaded you could easily procure from her a pavilion that might be carried in a man's hand, and which would extend over my whole army. Though it be a difficult thing, she will not refuse you. All the world knows fairies are capable of doing most extraordinary things."

Prince Ahmed never expected that the Sultan, his father, would have asked such a thing. When he returned, the fairy, to whom he had always before appeared with a gay countenance, asked him the cause of the alteration she perceived in his looks.

"Madam," he replied, "you may have observed that hitherto I have been content with your love, and have never asked you any favour; for what after the possession of so amiable a wife, can I desire more? Consider, then, I conjure you, that it is not me, but the Sultan, my father, who indiscreetly, as I think, asks of you a pavilion large enough to shelter him, his court and army from the violence of the weather, and which a man may carry in his hand. Once more, remember it is not I, but the Sultan, my father, who asks this favour."

"Prince," replied the fairy, smiling, "I am sorry that so small a matter should disturb you and make you so uneasy as you appeared to me." Then the fairy sent for her treasurer, to whom, when she came she said: "Nourighan, bring me the largest pavilion in my treasury." Nourighan returned presently with a pavilion which could be concealed in the palm of the hand when closed, and presented it to her Mistress, who gave it to Prince Ahmed.

When Prince Ahmed saw the pavilion which the fairy called the largest in her treasury, he fancied

she had a mind to banter him, and his surprise appeared in his face; which Pari Banou perceiving burst out laughing: "What Prince," cried she, "do you think I jest with you? You will see presently that I am in earnest. Nourighan," said she to her treasurer, taking the tent out of Prince Ahmed's hand, "go and set it up, that the Prince may judge whether the Sultan, his father, will think it large enough."

The Prince, so far from thinking it small found it large enough to shelter two armies as numerous as that of his father, said to Pari Banou: "I ask my Princess a thousand pardons for my incredulity. After what I have seen, I believe there is nothing impossible to you." "You see," said the fairy, "that the pavilion is larger than your father may have occasion for; but you must observe that it becomes larger or smaller, according to the army it is to cover, without applying any hands to it." The treasurer took down the tent again reduced it to its first size, and gave it to Prince Ahmed. The next day he went with his usual attendance to the Sultan his father.

The Sultan who was persuaded that such a tent as he asked for was beyond all possibility, was in great surprise at the Prince's diligence. To outward appearance he expressed great obligation to his son

for so noble a present, desiring him to return his thanks to the fairy Pari Banou. He again consulted the magician, who advised him to engage the Prince to bring him some of the water of the fountain of lions.

In the evening, when the Sultan was surrounded by his court, and the Prince came to pay his respects to him, "Son," said he, "I have already expressed to you how much I am obliged to you for the present of the tent you have procured me, which I look upon as the most valuable thing in my treasury; but you must do one thing more for me. I am informed that the fairy your spouse makes use of a certain water, called the water of the fountain of lions, which cures all sorts of fever; and as I am perfectly well persuaded that my health is dear to you, I do not doubt but you will ask her for a bottle of that water for me, and bring it me, as a sovereign remedy. Do me this important piece of service, and thereby complete the duty of a good son towards a tender father."

Prince Ahmed was thunderstruck at this new request. The next morning he returned to the fairy Pari Banou and related to her all that had passed as well as the new request made by the Sultan. "I leave you to your own pleasure, whether you will gratify or reject his new desire," he added.

"I will satisfy him," replied the fairy Pari Banou,

" and whatever advice the magician can give him (for I see that he harkens to her), he shall find no fault with you or me. There is a great deal of wickedness in this demand. The fountain of lions is situated in the middle of a court of a great castle, the entrance into which is guarded by four fierce lions, two of which sleep while the other two are awake. But let not that frighten you. I will give you means to pass by them without any danger."

The fairy Pari Banou was at that time at work with her needle; and as she had by her several clews of thread, she took one up and presenting it to Prince Ahmed, said: "First take this clew of thread: I will tell you presently the use of it. In the second place, you must have two horses; one, you must ride yourself, and the other you must lead, which must be loaded with a sheep cut into four quarters, that must be killed to-day. In the third place, you must be provided with a bottle, which I will give you, to bring the water in. Set out early to-morrow morning, and when you have passed the iron gate, throw before you the clew of thread, which will roll till it comes to the gates of the castle. Follow it, and when it stops, as the gates will be open, you will see the four lions. The two that are awake will, by their roaring, wake the other two. Be not frightened, but throw each of them a quarter of the sheep,

and then clap spurs to your horse, and ride to the fountain. Fill your bottle without alighting, and then return with the same haste. The lions will be so busy eating that they will let you pass by them."

Prince Ahmed set out the next morning at the time appointed by the fairy, and followed her directions exactly, and returned as safe and sound as he went. When he arrived at the capital of the Indies, he approached the throne, laid the bottle at the Sultan's feet, and kissed the rich carpet which covered the footstool, saying: "I have brought you, Sire, the salutary water which your Majesty so much desired, and at the same time wish you such extraordinary health as never to have occasion to make use of it."

The Sultan, who showed outward joy, secretly became more jealous, and retired into a private apartment, where he sent for the magician.

The next day the Sultan said to the Prince before all the courtiers: "Son, I have one thing more to ask of you. Bring me a man not above a foot and a half high, and whose beard is thirty feet long, who carries upon his shoulders a bar of iron of five hundred weight, which he uses as a quarter-staff, and who can speak."

Next day, the Prince returned to the subterranean kingdom of Pari Banou, to whom he told his father's

new demand, which, he said, he looked upon to be a thing more impossible than the two first.

"Do not be affrighted, Prince," replied the fairy. "It is my brother Schaibar. He is made exactly as the Sultan, your father, has described him. I will send for him; but be sure to prepare yourself not to be frightened at his extraordinary figure when you see him."

The fairy ordered a gold chafing-dish to be set with a fire under it under the porch of her palace, with a box of the same metal, out of which, taking some incense and throwing it into the fire, there arose a thick cloud of smoke.

Some moments after, the fairy said to Prince Ahmed: "Prince, there comes my brother; do you see him?" The Prince immediately perceived Schaibar, who was but a foot and a half high, coming gravely with a heavy bar on his shoulder; his beard thirty feet long supported itself before him, and a pair of thick mustaches in proportion tucked up to his ears, almost covered his face: his eyes were very small like a pig's and deep sunk in his head, which was of enormous size, and on which he wore a pointed cap. Besides all this, he had a hump behind and before.

As Schaibar came forward he looked at the Prince with an eye that would have chilled his soul in his

body and asked Pari Banou who that man was! To which she replied: "He is my husband, brother; his name is Ahmed; he is son to the Sultan of the Indies; on his account I have taken the liberty now to call for you."

At these words, Schaibar, looking on Prince Ahmed with a favourable eye, which however diminished neither his fierceness nor savage look, said: "Is there anything sister, wherein I can serve him? He has only to speak. It is enough for me that he is your husband to engage me to do for him whatever he desires."

"The Sultan, his father," replied Pari Banou, "has a curiosity to see you, and I desire he may be your guide to the Sultan's court."

"He needs but lead me the way; I will follow him," said Schaibar.

The next morning, Schaibar set out with Prince Ahmed, who was to present him to the Sultan. When they arrived at the gates of the capital, the people no sooner saw Schaibar than they ran and hid themselves in their shops and houses, shutting their doors; insomuch that Schaibar and Prince Ahmed as they went along, found all the streets and squares desolate till they came to the palace, where the porters ran away too; so that Prince Ahmed and he advanced alone to the council-hall, where the Sultan was seated

on his throne, giving audience. Here, likewise, the officers, at the approach of Schaibar, abandoned their posts.

Schaibar, carrying his head erect, went fiercely up to the throne, without waiting to be presented by Prince Ahmed, and accosted the Sultan of the Indies, in these words: "You have asked for me," said he; "see, here I am: what would you have with me?"

The Sultan, instead of answering, clapped his hands before his eyes to avoid the sight of so terrible an object. Schaibar was so much provoked at this rude reception that he lifted up his iron bar, and saying, "Speak!" let it fall on his head, and killed him, before Prince Ahmed could intercede. Then he killed all the viziers, right and left, flatterers and favourites of the Sultan who were Prince Ahmed's enemies. When this terrible execution was over, Schaibar went into the court-yard, with the iron bar upon his shoulder, and looking at the grand vizier, whose life Prince Ahmed had saved, said: "I know here is a certain female magician, who is a greater enemy of the Prince, my brother-in-law, than all those base favourites I have chastised: let her be brought before me."

The grand vizier sent for her, and as soon as she appeared, Schaibar said, knocking her down with the iron bar, "Take the reward of thy pernicious coun-

sel and learn to feign sickness again." He left her dead on the spot.

After this he said: "This is not yet enough. I will treat the whole city after the same manner if they do not immediately acknowledge Prince Ahmed my brother-in-law for their Sultan, and Sultan of the Indies." Then the air rang with the repeated acclamations: "Long life to Prince Ahmed," and he was proclaimed throughout the town. Schaibar caused him to be robed in the royal vestments and seated on the throne, and after he had made all swear homage and fidelity to him, went and fetched his sister, Pari Banou, whom he brought with great pomp, and made her to be acknowledged Sultaness of the Indies.

THE SILLY JELLY-FISH

NCE upon a time the King of the Dragons, who had till then lived as a bachelor, took it into his head to get married. His bride was a young Dragonette just sixteen years old, —lovely enough, in very sooth, to become the wife of a King. Great were the rejoicings on the occasion. The Fishes, both great and small, came to pay their respects, and to offer gifts to the newly wedded pair; and for some days all was feasting and merriment.

But alas! even Dragons have their trials. Before a month had passed, the young Dragon Queen fell ill. The doctors dosed her with every medicine that was known to them, but all to no purpose. At last they shook their heads, declaring that there was nothing more to be done. The illness must take its course, and she would probably die. But the sick Queen said to her husband:

"I know of something that will cure me. Only fetch me a live Monkey's liver to eat, and I shall get well at once."

"A live Monkey's liver!" exclaimed the King, "What are you thinking of, my dear? Why! you forget that we Dragons live in the sea, while Monkeys live far away from here, among the forest trees on land. A Monkey's liver! Why! darling, you must be mad."

Hereupon the young Dragon Queen burst into tears:

"I only ask you for one small thing," whimpered she, "and you won't get it for me. I always thought you didn't really love me. Oh! I wish I had staid at home with my own m-m-m-mama and my own papa-a-a-a!" Here her voice choked with sobs, and she could say no more.

Well, of course, the Dragon King did not like to have it thought that he was unkind to his beautiful young wife. So he sent for his trusty servant, the Jelly-Fish, and said: "It is rather a difficult job; but what I want you to try to do is to swim across to the land and persuade a live Monkey to come here with you. In order to make the Monkey willing to come, you can tell him how much nicer everything is here in Dragon-Land than where he lives. But what I really want him for is to cut out his liver, and use it as medicine for your young Mistress, who, as you know, is dangerously ill."

So the Jelly-Fish went off on his strange errand.

In those days he was just like any other fish, with eyes, and fins, and a tail. He even had little feet, which made him able to walk on the land as well as to swim in the water. It did not take him many hours to swim across to the country where the Monkeys lived; and, fortunately, there just happened to be a fine Monkey skipping about among the branches of the trees near the place where the Jelly-Fish landed. So the Jelly-Fish said:

"Mr. Monkey! I have come to tell you of a country far more beautiful than this. It lies beyond the waves, and is called Dragon-Land. There is pleasant weather there all the year round, there is always plenty of ripe fruit on the trees, and there are none of those mischievous creatures called Men. If you will come with me, I will take you there. Just get on my back."

The Monkey thought it would be fun to see a new country. So he leapt on to the Jelly-Fish's back, and off they started across the water. But when they had gone about half-way, he began to fear that perhaps there might be some hidden danger. It seemed so odd to be fetched suddenly in that way by a stranger. So he said to the Jelly-Fish:

"What made you think of coming for me?"

The Jelly-Fish answered:

"My Master, the King of the Dragons, wants you

in order to cut out your liver, and give it as medicine to his wife, the Queen, who is sick."

"Oh! that's your little game,—is it?" thought the Monkey. But he kept his thoughts to himself, and only said:

"Nothing could please me better than to be of service to Their Majesties. But it so happens that I left my liver hanging to a branch of that big chestnut-tree, which you found me skipping about on. A liver is a thing that weighs a good deal. So I generally take it out, and play about without it during the daytime. We must go back for it."

The Jelly-Fish agreed that there was nothing else to be done under the circumstances. For—silly creature that he was—he did not see that the Monkey was telling a story in order to avoid getting killed and having his liver used as medicine for the fanciful young Dragon Queen.

When they reached the shore of Monkey-Land again, the Monkey bounded off the Jelly-Fish's back, and up to the topmost branch of the chestnut-tree in less than no time. Then he said: "I do not see my liver here. Perhaps somebody has taken it away. But I will look for it. You, meantime, had better go back and tell your Master what has happened. He might be anxious about you, if you did not get home before dark."

So the Jelly-Fish started off a second time; and when he got home, he told the Dragon King everything just as it had happened. But the King flew into a passion with him for his stupidity, and hallooed to his officers, saying:

"Away with this fellow! Take him, and beat him to a jelly! Don't let a single bone remain unbroken in his body!"

So the officers seized him and beat him, as the King had commanded. That is the reason why, to this very day, Jelly-Fishes have no bones, but are just nothing more than a mass of pulp.

As for the Dragon-Queen, when she found she could not have the Monkey's liver—why! she made up her mind that the only thing to do was to get well without it.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

NCE upon a time, there was a King and a Queen who were greatly distressed because they had no children; it is impossible to describe how unhappy they were. Finally, however, the Queen had a daughter, and they gave a very fine christening, selecting as Godmothers for the little Princess all the Fairies that could be found in the country (they found seven), so that each one could bestow a gift upon her, as was the custom in those days, and by this means the Princess had all the perfections imaginable. After the baptismal ceremonies, the entire company returned to the King's castle, where they had a great feast for the Fairies. Before each one of them there was a magnificent cover, with a case of massy gold which contained a spoon, a fork and a knife of fine gold set with diamonds and rubies. But as each took her seat at the table, there entered an old Fairy who had not been invited, because for more than fifty years she had not gone out of the tower and everybody believed her

dead, or enchanted. The King had a seat made for her but there was no way of getting for her a case of gold such as the others had, because only seven had been made for the seven Fairies. The old Fairy, believing that she was slighted, muttered some threats to herself. One of the young Fairies who was close beside her, heard her, and fearing that she might bestow some unlucky gift upon the little Princess, slipped away, as soon as they got up from the table and hid herself behind the tapestry so that she might, as far as possible, counteract the evil that the old Fairy might do.

The Fairies all began to bestow their gifts upon the Princess. The youngest Fairy's gift was that she should be the most beautiful person in the world; the next, that she should have the mind of an angel; the third, that she should do everything with wonderful grace; the fourth, that she should dance beautifully; the fifth, that she should sing like a nightingale; and the sixth, that she should play all kinds of instruments to perfection. When the old Fairy's turn had come, she said angrily shaking her head, that the Princess should stick her hand with a spindle and that she should die in consequence. This terrible sentence made the whole company shudder, and everybody wept. At this moment, the young Fairy stepped from behind the tapestry and said these words in a

very loud voice: "Be assured, King and Queen, your daughter will not die. It is true that I have not enough power to undo entirely what the old Fairy has done. The Princess will stick her hand with a spindle, but instead of dying, she will only fall into a deep sleep which will last for a hundred years, at the end of which the young son of a King will come to awaken her."

The King endeavoured to avoid the calamity announced by the old Fairy by instantly publishing an edict forbidding to spin with a spindle, or even to have a spindle in the house on pain of death. At the end of fifteen or sixteen years the King and Queen having gone to one of their country-seats, it happened that the young Princess was running about the castle, and going from room to room, she climbed up to the very top of a donjon tower into a little garret where a good old woman sat all alone spinning from her distaff. This good woman had never heard of the punishment the King had ordered for those who spun with a spindle. "What are you doing there, my good woman?" the Princess said to her. "I am spinning, my lovely child," replied the old woman, who did not know her.

"Ah! how nice that is!" replied the Princess, "how do you do it? Let me try, and see if I can do it as well as you."

She had no sooner taken hold of the spindle and as she was very quick and a little heedless, and, moreover, the Fairies had ordained it to be thus, she stuck her hand and fainted away.

The old woman, greatly troubled, cried for help. People came running from every side: one threw water in the Princess's face; another placed her in a more comfortable position; another slapped her, and another rubbed her temples with Hungary water; but nothing would bring her to. Then the King, who was attracted home by the excitement, mounted the tower, remembered the prediction of the Fairies and judged correctly that what had happened took place because the Fairies had foretold it. He had the Princess carried into the most beautiful apartment in the Palace and placed on a bed embroidered with gold and silver. One would have thought her an angel, so beautiful was she. The swoon had not taken away the lively colours of her complexion: her cheeks were like roses and her lips like coral: the only thing was that her eyes were shut and her gentle breathing showed that she was not dead. The King ordered that she should be allowed to sleep in peace until the hour for her awakening should come.

The good Fairy, who had saved her life by condemning her to sleep for a hundred years, was in the Kingdom of Mataquin, twelve thousand leagues away

when this accident happened to the Princess; but she was informed of it in an instant by a little Dwarf, who had Seven League Boots (These were the boots which go seven leagues at one stride). The Fairy left instantly, and in about an hour they saw her coming in a fiery chariot drawn by dragons. The King went forward to hand her out of her chariot. She approved of everything that he had done; but as she had wonderful foresight, she thought that when the Princess awoke she would be in great distress to be alone in this old castle. Now listen to what she did: She touched with her ring everybody who was in the castle (excepting the King and Queen) governesses, Maids of Honour, lady's maids, gentlemen, officers, stewards, cooks, scullions, turnspits, guards, porters, pages and running footmen; she also touched the horses that were in the stables with the grooms, the large mastifs in the outer court and little Pouffe, the Princess's little dog that was lying beside her on the bed. At the moment she touched it everything slept, to awaken only with the mistress, so as to be ready for her service when she would have need of it. Even the spits before the fire that were full of partridges and pheasants slept, and the fire as well. All this was done in a minute, for Fairies are not long at their work. Then the King and Queen having kissed their daughter with-

out awakening her, left the castle and published orders that none should approach it. These orders were not necessary, for in a quarter of an hour there grew up all around the park, a vast number of trees, great and small, and briers and thorns that interlaced so thickly that neither man nor beast could pass through: they were so thick that you could only see the tops of the towers of the castle from a distance. There was no doubt whatever but that the Fairy had given another example of her magical power by this, so that while the Princess slept, she should never suffer from the inquisitive.

At the end of a hundred years, the son of the reigning King, who was not related to the sleeping Princess was hunting in the neighbourhood and asked what those Towers were that he saw above the thick woods, and everybody explained according to hearsay. Some said it was an old castle visited by spirits; others that the sorcerers of the country held their Sabbaths there. The most general opinion was that an Ogre lived there, and that he carried the children there that he caught, so that he could eat them at his pleasure and without fear of any one following him, as he was the only one who could walk through the thick woods.

The Prince hardly knew what to believe, when an old Peasant made so bold as to say: "My Prince,

more than fifty years ago I heard my father say that in that castle was the most beautiful Princess in the world; that she was doomed to sleep for a hundred years when she would be awakened by the son of a King for whom she was destined." At this speech, the young Prince was all on fire; he believed, without stopping to think, that he would put an end to this fate, and, inspired by love and glory, he resolved to undertake the quest. He had barely reached the wood before all the great trees briers and thorns opened of themselves to let him pass: he walked toward the castle, which he saw at the end of a long avenue, and entered it. It surprised him greatly to see that none of his men could follow him, because the trees closed together again the instant he passed through them. This did not prevent him, however, from continuing his way: a young and lovesick Prince is always valiant. First, he entered a large forecourt where he found enough to instil fear: here a frightful silence reigned, the image of death was everywhere; for on all sides were the bodies of men and animals that appeared to be dead. He soon realised, however, from the pimpled noses and the red faces of the porters that they were only sleeping, for they had a few drops of wine in their cups which showed that they dropped off to sleep while drinking. He passed through a great court paved with marble

The Peasant tells of the Castle

and entered the guard-room, where the soldiers stood in a row, each with a carabine on his shoulder and snoring with all his might. He walked through several chambers full of gentlemen and ladies, all asleep, some of them lying at full length, others sitting upright; and finally, he entered a chamber all decorated in gold and saw lying upon a bed, whose curtains were open at the sides, the most beautiful sight possible,—a young Princess who seemed to be fifteen or sixteen and whose resplendent beauty had something about it both luminous and divine. Trembling and wondering, he approached and knelt beside her. Then as the end of the enchantment had come, the Princess awoke and regarded him with tenderer glances than a first sight would warrant.

"Is it you, my Prince," she said. "You are indeed well worth waiting for." The Prince charmed with these words, and still more with the manner in which they were said, did not know how to express his joy: he assured her that he loved her more than himself. Their conversation was not brilliant, for they wept much and had little eloquence and much love. He was more embarrassed than she was; and this is not to be wondered at. She had had time to dream about what she would say to him; and he had indeed exactly the appearance (history says nothing to the contrary) that the good Fairy had given her the

pleasure of seeing in beautiful dreams during her long sleep.

Really, they talked together for four hours and then hadn't finished half they wanted to say.

But meanwhile, the whole castle had awakened with the Princess. Everybody began to resume his business; and, as they were not all in love, they were dying with hunger. One Maid of Honour, hurrying like the others, grew impatient, and said in a loud voice to the Princess that supper was served. The Prince helped the Princess to get up. She was very magnificently dressed; but I may as well tell you that she was dressed in the fashion of my grandmother, and wore a great wired ruff; but she was none the less beautiful for all that. They passed into the *salon de miroirs* and had supper there, served by the Princess's officers; the violins and hautboys played old, but very excellent pieces, although they had not played for a hundred years; and after supper, without losing any time, the Chaplain married them in the chapel of the castle.

THE LITTLE MERMAID

FAR out in the ocean, where the water is as blue as the prettiest corn-flower, and as clear as crystal, it is very, very deep; so deep, indeed, that no cable could fathom it; many church steeples, piled one upon another, would not reach from the ground beneath to the surface of the water above. There dwell the Sea King and his subjects. We must not imagine that there is nothing at the bottom of the sea but bare yellow sand. No, indeed: the most singular flowers and plants grow there; the leaves and stems of which are so pliant, that the slightest agitation of the water causes them to stir as if they had life. Fishes, both large and small, glide between the branches, as birds fly among the trees here upon land. In the deepest spot of all, stands the castle of the Sea King. Its walls are built of coral, and the long, Gothic windows are of the clearest amber. The roof is formed of shells, that open and close as the water flows over them. Their appearance is very beautiful; for in each lies a glow-

ing pearl, which would be fit for the diadem of a queen.

The Sea King had been a widower for many years, and his aged mother kept house for him. She was a very wise woman, and exceedingly proud of her high birth: on that account she wore twelve oysters on her tail; while others, also of high rank, were allowed to wear only six. She was, however, deserving of very great praise, especially for her care of the little sea-princesses, her grand-daughters. They were six beautiful children; but the youngest was the prettiest of them all; her skin was as clear and delicate as a rose-leaf, and her eyes as blue as the deepest sea; but, like all the others, she had no feet, and her body ended in a fish's tail. All day long they played in the great halls of the castle, or among the living flowers that grew out of the walls. The large amber windows were open, and the fish swam in, just as the swallows fly into our houses when we open the windows, excepting that the fishes swam up to the princesses, ate out of their hands, and allowed themselves to be stroked. Outside the castle there was a beautiful garden, in which grew bright red and dark blue flowers and blossoms like flames of fire; the fruit glittered like gold, and the leaves and stems waved to and fro continually. The earth itself was the finest sand, but blue as the flame of burning sulphur.

Over everything lay a peculiar blue radiance, as if it were surrounded by the air from above, through which the blue sky shone, instead of the dark depths of the sea. In calm weather, the sun could be seen, looking like a purple flower, with the light streaming from the calyx. Each of the young princesses had a little plot of ground in the garden, where she might dig and plant as she pleased. One arranged her flower-bed into the form of a whale; another thought it better to make hers like the figure of a little mermaid; but that of the youngest was round like the sun, and contained flowers as red as his rays at sunset. She was a strange child, quiet and thoughtful; and while her sisters would be delighted with the wonderful things which they obtained from the wrecks of vessels, she cared for nothing but her pretty red flowers, like the sun, excepting a beautiful marble statue. It was the representation of a handsome boy, carved out of pure white stone, which had fallen to the bottom of the sea from a wreck. She planted by the statue a rose-coloured weeping willow. It grew splendidly, and very soon hung its fresh branches over the statue, almost down to the blue sands. The shadow had a violet tint, and waved to and fro like the branches; it seemed as if the crown of the tree and the root were at play, and trying to kiss each other. Nothing gave her so much pleasure

as to hear about the world above the sea. She made her old grandmother tell her all she knew of the ships and of the towns, the people and the animals. To her it seemed most wonderful and beautiful to hear that the flowers of the land should have fragrance, and not those below the sea; that the trees of the forest should be green; and that the fishes among the trees could sing so sweetly, that it was quite a pleasure to hear them. Her grandmother called the little birds fishes, or she would not have understood her; for she had never seen birds.

"When you have reached your fifteenth year," said the grandmother, "you will have permission to rise up out of the sea, to sit on the rocks in the moonlight, while the great ships are sailing by; and then you will see both forests and towns."

In the following year, one of the sisters would be fifteen: but as each was a year younger than the other, the youngest would have to wait five years before her turn came to rise up from the bottom of the ocean, and see the earth as we do. However, each promised to tell the others what she saw on her first visit, and what she thought the most beautiful; for their grandmother could not tell them enough; there were so many things on which they wanted information. None of them longed so much for her turn to come as the youngest, she who had the longest

time to wait, and who was so quiet and thoughtful. Many nights she stood by the open window, looking up through the dark blue water, and watching the fish as they splashed about with their fins and tails. She could see the moon and stars shining faintly; but through the water they looked larger than they do to our eyes. When something like a black cloud passed between her and them, she knew that it was either a whale swimming over her head, or a ship full of human beings, who never imagined that a pretty little mermaid was standing beneath them, holding out her white hands towards the keel of their ship.

As soon as the eldest was fifteen, she was allowed to rise to the surface of the ocean. When she came back, she had hundreds of things to talk about; but the most beautiful, she said, was to lie in the moonlight, on a sandbank, in the quiet sea, near the coast, and to gaze on a large town close by, where the lights were twinkling like hundreds of stars; to listen to the sounds of the music, the noise of carriages, and the voices of human beings, and then to hear the merry bells peal out from the church steeples; and because she could not go near to all these wonderful things, she longed for them more than ever. Oh, did not the youngest sister listen eagerly to all these descriptions! and afterwards, when she stood at the open window looking up through the dark blue water, she

thought of the great city, with all its bustle and noise, and even fancied she could hear the sound of the church bells, down in the depths of the sea.

In another year the second sister received permission to rise to the surface of the water, and to swim about where she pleased. She rose just as the sun was setting, and this, she said, was the most beautiful sight of all. The whole sky looked like gold, while violet and rose-coloured clouds, which she could not describe, floated over her; and, still more rapidly than the clouds, flew a large flock of wild swans towards the setting sun, looking like a long white veil across the sea. She also swam towards the sun; but it sunk into the waves, and the rosy tints faded from the clouds and from the sea.

The third sister's turn followed; she was the boldest of them all, and she swam up a broad river that emptied itself into the sea. On the banks she saw green hills covered with beautiful vines; palaces and castles peeped out from amid the proud trees of the forest; she heard the birds singing, and the rays of the sun were so powerful that she was obliged often to dive down under the water to cool her burning face. In a narrow creek she found a whole troop of little human children, quite naked, and sporting about in the water; she wanted to play with them, but they fled in a great fright; and then a little black animal

came to the water; it was a dog, but she did not know that, for she had never before seen one. This animal barked at her so terribly that she became frightened, and rushed back to the open sea. But she said she should never forget the beautiful forest, the green hills, and the pretty children who could swim in the water, although they had not fish's tails.

The fourth sister was more timid; she remained in the midst of the sea, but she said it was quite as beautiful there as nearer the land. She could see for so many miles around her, and the sky above looked like a bell of glass. She had seen the ships, but at such a great distance that they looked like sea-gulls. The dolphins sported in the waves, and the great whales spouted water from their nostrils till it seemed as if a hundred fountains were playing in every direction.

The fifth sister's birthday occurred in the winter; so, when her turn came, she saw what the others had not seen the first time they went up. The sea looked quite green, and large icebergs were floating about, each like a pearl, she said, but larger and loftier than the churches built by men. They were of the most singular shapes, and glittered like diamonds. She had seated herself upon one of the largest, and let the wind play with her long hair, and she remarked that all the ships sailed by rapidly, and steered as far away as they could from the iceberg, as if they were

afraid of it. Towards evening, as the sun went down, dark clouds covered the sky, the thunder rolled and the lightning flashed, and the red light glowed on the icebergs as they rocked and tossed on the heaving sea. On all the ships the sails were reefed with fear and trembling, while she sat calmly on the floating iceberg, watching the blue lightning, as it darted its forked flashes into the sea.

When first the sisters had permission to rise to the surface, they were each delighted with the new and beautiful sights they saw; but now, as grown-up girls, they could go when they pleased, and they had become indifferent about it. They wished themselves back again in the water, and, after a month had passed, they said it was much more beautiful down below, and pleasanter to be at home. Yet often, in the evening hours, the five sisters would twine their arms round each other, and rise to the surface, in a row. They had more beautiful voices than any human being could have; and before the approach of a storm, and when they expected a ship would be lost, they swam before the vessel, and sang sweetly of the delights to be found in the depths of the sea, begging the sailors not to fear if they sank to the bottom. But the sailors could not understand the song, they took it for the howling of the storm. And these things were never to be beautiful for them; for if the

ship sank, the men were drowned, and their dead bodies alone reached the palace of the Sea King.

When the sisters rose, arm-in-arm, through the water in this way, their youngest sister would stand quite alone, looking after them, ready to cry, only that the mermaids have no tears, and therefore they suffer more. "Oh, were I but fifteen years old," said she; "I know that I shall love the world up there, and all the people who live in it."

At last she reached her fifteenth year. "Well, now, you are grown up," said the old dowager, her grandmother; "so you must let me adorn you like your other sisters:" and she placed a wreath of white lilies in her hair, and every flower leaf was half a pearl. Then the old lady ordered eight great oysters to attach themselves to the tail of the princess to show her high rank.

"But they hurt me so," said the little mermaid.

"Pride must suffer pain," replied the old lady. Oh, how gladly she would have shaken off all this grandeur, and laid aside the heavy wreath! The red flowers in her own garden would have suited her much better; but she could not help herself: so she said, "Farewell," and rose as lightly as a bubble to the surface of the water. The sun had just set as she raised her head above the waves; but the clouds were tinted with crimson and gold, and through the glim-

mering twilight beamed the evening star in all its beauty. The sea was calm, and the air mild and fresh. A large ship, with three masts, lay becalmed on the water, with only one sail set; for not a breeze stirred, and the sailors sat idle on deck, or amongst the rigging. There was music and song on board; and, as darkness came on, a hundred coloured lanterns were lighted, as if the flags of all nations waved in the air. The little mermaid swam close to the cabin windows; and now and then, as the waves lifted her up, she could look in through clear glass window-panes, and see a number of well-dressed people within. Among them was a young prince, the most beautiful of all, with large black eyes; he was sixteen years of age, and his birthday was being kept with much rejoicing. The sailors were dancing on deck, but when the prince came out of the cabin, more than a hundred rockets rose in the air, making it as bright as day. The little mermaid was so startled that she dived under water; and when she again stretched out her head, it appeared as if all the stars of heaven were falling around her, she had never seen such fireworks before. Great suns spurted fire about, splendid fire-flies flew into the blue air, and everything was reflected in the clear, calm sea beneath. The ship itself was so brightly illuminated that all the people, and even the smallest rope, could

The little mermaid watches ye Prince

be distinctly and plainly seen. And how handsome the young prince looked, as he pressed the hands of all present and smiled at them, while the music resounded through the clear night air!

It was very late; yet the little mermaid could not take her eyes from the ship, or from the beautiful prince. The coloured lanterns had been extinguished, no more rockets rose in the air, and the cannon had ceased firing; but the sea became restless, and a moaning, grumbling sound could be heard beneath the waves: still the little mermaid remained by the cabin window, rocking up and down on the water, which enabled her to look in. After a while, the sails were quickly unfurled, and the noble ship continued her passage; but soon the waves rose higher, heavy clouds darkened the sky, and lightning appeared in the distance. A dreadful storm was approaching; once more the sails were reefed and the great ship pursued her flying course over the raging sea. The waves rose mountain high, as if they would have overtopped the mast; but the ship dived like a swan between them, and then rose again on their lofty, foaming crests. To the little mermaid this appeared pleasant sport; not so to the sailors. At length the ship groaned and creaked; the thick planks gave way under the lashing of the sea as it broke over the deck; the mainmast snapped asunder like a reed; the

ship lay over on her side; and the water rushed in. The little mermaid now perceived that the crew were in danger; even she herself was obliged to be careful to avoid the beams and planks of the wreck which lay scattered on the water. At one moment it was so pitch dark that she could not see a single object, then a flash of lightning revealed the whole scene; she could see every one who had been on board except the Prince; when the ship parted, she had seen him sink into the deep waves, and she was glad, for she thought he would now be with her; and then she remembered that human beings could not live in the water, so that when he got down to her father's palace he would be quite dead. But he must not die. So she swam about among the beams and planks which strewed the surface of the sea, forgetting that they could crush her to pieces. Then she dived deeply under the dark waters, rising and falling with the waves, till at length she managed to reach the young prince, who was fast losing the power of swimming in that stormy sea. His limbs were failing him, his beautiful eyes were closed, and he would have died had not the little mermaid come to his assistance. She held his head above the water, and let the waves drift them where they would.

In the morning the storm had ceased; but of the ship not a single fragment could be seen. The sun

rose up red and glowing from the water, and its beams brought back the hue of health to the prince's cheeks; but his eyes remained closed. The mermaid kissed his high, smooth forehead, and stroked back his wet hair; he seemed to her like the marble statue in her little garden, and she kissed him again, and wished that he might live. Presently they came in sight of land; she saw lofty blue mountains, on which the white snow rested as if a flock of swans were lying upon them. Near the coast were beautiful green forests, and close by stood a large building, whether a church or a convent she could not tell. Orange and citron trees grew in the garden, and before the door stood lofty palms. The sea here formed a little bay, in which the water was quite still, but very deep; so she swam with the handsome prince to the beach, which was covered with fine, white sand, and there she laid him in the warm sunshine, taking care to raise his head higher than his body. Then bells sounded in the large white building, and a number of young girls came into the garden. The little mermaid swam out farther from the shore, and placed herself between some high rocks that rose out of the water; then she covered her head and neck with the foam of the sea so that her little face might not be seen, and watched to see what would become of the poor prince. She did not wait long before she saw a

young girl approach the spot where he lay. She seemed frightened at first, but only for a moment; then she fetched a number of people, and the mermaid saw that the prince came to life again, and smiled upon those who stood round him. But to her he sent no smile; he knew not that she had saved him. This made her very unhappy, and when he was led away into the great building, she dived down sorrowfully into the water, and returned to her father's castle. She had always been silent and thoughtful, and now she was more so than ever. Her sisters asked her what she had seen during her first visit to the surface of the water; but she would tell them nothing. Many an evening and morning did she rise to the place where she had left the prince. She saw the fruits in the garden ripen till they were gathered, the snow on the tops of the mountains melt away; but she never saw the prince; and, therefore, she returned home, always more sorrowful than before. It was her only comfort to sit in her own little garden, and fling her arm round the beautiful marble statue which was like the prince; but she gave up tending her flowers, and they grew in wild confusion over the paths, twining their long leaves and stems round the branches of the trees, so that the whole place became dark and gloomy. At length she could bear it no longer, and told one of her sisters all about

it. Then the others heard the secret, and very soon it became known to two mermaids whose intimate friend happened to know who the prince was. She had also seen the festival on board ship, and she told them where the prince came from, and where his palace stood.

"Come, little sister," said the other princesses; then they entwined their arms, and rose up in a long row to the surface of the water, close by the spot where they knew the prince's palace stood. It was built of bright yellow shining stone, with long flights of marble steps, one of which reached quite down to the sea. Splendid gilded cupolas rose over the roof, and between the pillars that surrounded the whole building stood life-like statues of marble. Through the clear crystal of the lofty windows could be seen noble rooms, with costly silk curtains and hangings of tapestry; while the walls were covered with beautiful paintings, which were a pleasure to look at. In the centre of the largest saloon a fountain threw its sparkling jets high up into the glass cupola of the ceiling, through which the sun shone down upon the water and upon the beautiful plants growing round the basin of the fountain. Now that she knew where he lived, she spent many an evening and many a night on the water near the palace. She would swim much nearer the shore than any of the others had

ventured to do; indeed once she went quite up the narrow channel under the marble balcony, which threw a broad shadow on the water. Here she would sit and watch the young prince, who thought himself quite alone in the bright moonlight. She saw him many times of an evening sailing in a pleasure boat, with music playing and flags waving. She peeped out from among the green rushes, and if the wind caught her long silvery-white veil, those who saw it believed it to be a swan, spreading out its wings. On many a night, too, when the fishermen, with their torches, were out at sea, she heard them relate so many good things about the doings of the young prince, that she was glad she had saved his life when he had been tossed about half-dead on the waves. And she remembered that his head had rested on her bosom, and how heartily she had kissed him; but he knew nothing of all this, and could not even dream of her. She grew more and more fond of human beings, and wished more and more to be able to wander about with those whose world seemed to be so much larger than her own. They could fly over the sea in ships, and mount the high hills which were far above the clouds; and the lands they possessed, their woods and their fields, stretched far away beyond the reach of her sight. There was so much that she wished to know, and her sisters were unable to answer all her

questions. Then she applied to her old grandmother, who knew all about the upper world, which she very rightly called the lands above the sea.

"If human beings are not drowned," asked the little mermaid, "can they live for ever? do they never die as we do here in the sea?"

"Yes," replied the old lady, "they must also die, and their term of life is even shorter than ours. We sometimes live to three hundred years, but when we cease to exist here we only become the foam on the surface of the water, and we have not even a grave down here of those we love. We have not immortal souls, we shall never live again; but, like the green sea-weed, when once it has been cut off, we can never flourish more. Human beings, on the contrary, have a soul which lives for ever, lives after the body has been turned to dust. It rises up through the clear, pure air beyond the glittering stars. As we rise out of the water, and behold all the land of the earth, so do they rise to unknown and glorious regions which we shall never see."

"Why have not we an immortal soul?" asked the little mermaid mournfully; "I would give gladly all the hundreds of years that I have to live, to be a human being only for one day, and to have the hope of knowing the happiness of that glorious world above the stars."

"You must not think of that," said the old woman; "we feel ourselves to be much happier and much better off than human beings."

"So I shall die," said the little mermaid, "and as the foam of the sea I shall be driven about never again to hear the music of the waves, or to see the pretty flowers nor the red sun. Is there anything I can do to win an immortal soul?"

"No," said the old woman, "unless a man were to love you so much that you were more to him than his father or mother; and if all his thoughts and all his love were fixed upon you, and the priest placed his right hand in yours, and he promised to be true to you here and hereafter, then his soul would glide into your body, and you would obtain a share in the future happiness of mankind. He would give a soul to you and retain his own as well; but this can never happen. Your fish's tail, which amongst us is considered so beautiful, is thought on earth to be quite ugly; they do not know any better, and they think it necessary to have two stout props, which they call legs, in order to be handsome."

Then the little mermaid sighed, and looked sorrowfully at her fish's tail. "Let us be happy," said the old lady, "and dart and spring about during the three hundred years that we have to live, which is really quite long enough; after that we can rest our-

selves all the better. This evening we are going to have a court ball."

It was one of those splendid sights which we can never see on earth. The walls and the ceiling of the large ball-room were of thick, but transparent crystal. Many hundreds of colossal shells, some of a deep red, others of a grass green, stood on each side in rows, with blue fire in them, which lighted up the whole saloon, and shone through the walls, so that the sea was also illuminated. Innumerable fishes, great and small, swam past the crystal walls; on some of them the scales glowed with a purple brilliancy, and on others they shone like silver and gold. Through the halls flowed a broad stream, and in it danced the mermen and the mermaids to the music of their own sweet singing. No one on earth has such a lovely voice as theirs. The little mermaid sang more sweetly than them all. The whole court applauded her with hands and tails; and for a moment her heart felt quite gay, for she knew she had the loveliest voice of any on earth or in the sea. But she soon thought again of the world above her, for she could not forget the charming prince, nor her sorrow that she had not an immortal soul like his; therefore she crept away silently out of her father's palace, and while everything within was gladness and song, she sat in her own little garden sorrowful and alone. Then she

heard the bugle sounding through the water, and thought—"He is certainly sailing above, he on whom my wishes depend, and in whose hands I should like to place the happiness of my life. I will venture all for him, and to win an immortal soul; while my sisters are dancing in my father's palace, I will go to the Sea Witch, of whom I have always been so much afraid, but she can give me counsel and help."

And then the little mermaid went out from her garden, and took the road to the foaming whirlpools, behind which the sorceress lived. She had never been that way before: neither flowers nor grass grew there; nothing but bare, grey sandy ground stretched out to the whirlpool, where the water, like foaming mill-wheels, whirled round everything that it seized, and cast it into the fathomless deep. Through the midst of these crushing whirlpools the little mermaid was obliged to pass, to reach the dominions of the Sea Witch; and also for a long distance the only road lay right across a quantity of warm, bubbling mire, called by the Witch her turf-moor. Beyond this stood her house, in the centre of a strange forest, in which all the trees and flowers were polypi, half animals and half plants; they looked like serpents with a hundred heads growing out of the ground. The branches were long slimy arms, with fingers like flexible worms,

moving limb after limb from the root to the top. All that could be reached in the sea they seized upon, and held fast, so that it never escaped from their clutches. The little mermaid was so alarmed at what she saw, that she stood still, and her heart beat with fear, and she was very nearly turning back; but she thought of the prince, and of the human soul for which she longed, and her courage returned. She fastened her long flowing hair round her head, so that the polypi might not seize hold of it. She laid her hands together across her bosom, and then she darted forward as a fish shoots through the water, between the supple arms and fingers of the ugly polypi, which were stretched out on each side of her. She saw that each held in its grasp something it had seized with its numerous little arms, as if they were iron bands. The white skeletons of human beings who had perished at sea, and had sunk down into the deep waters, skeletons of land animals, oars, rudders, and chests of ships were lying tightly grasped by their clinging arms; even a little mermaid, whom they had caught and strangled; and this seemed the most shocking of all to the little princess.

She now came to a space of marshy ground in the wood, where large, fat water-snakes were rolling in the mire, and showing their ugly, drab-coloured bodies. In the midst of this spot stood a house,

built with the bones of shipwrecked human beings. There sat the Sea Witch, allowing a toad to eat from her mouth, just as people sometimes feed a canary with a piece of sugar. She called the ugly water-snakes her little chickens, and allowed them to crawl all over her bosom.

"I know what you want," said the Sea Witch; "it is very stupid of you, but you shall have your way, and it will bring you to sorrow, my pretty princess. You want to get rid of your fish's tail, and to have two supports instead of it, like human beings on earth, so that the young prince may fall in love with you, and that you may have an immortal soul." And then the Witch laughed so loud and disgustingly, that the toad and the snakes fell to the ground, and lay there wriggling about. "You are but just in time," said the Witch; "for after sunrise to-morrow I should not be able to help you till the end of another year. I will prepare a draught for you, with which you must swim to land to-morrow before sunrise, and sit down on the shore and drink it. Your tail will then disappear, and shrink up into what mankind call legs; and you will feel great pain, as if a sword were passing through you. But all who see you will say that you are the prettiest little human being they ever saw. You will still have the same floating gracefulness of movement, and no dancer will ever tread so

lightly; but at every step you take it will feel as if you were treading upon sharp knives, and that the blood must flow. If you will bear all this, I will help you."

"Yes, I will," said the little princess, in a trembling voice, as she thought of the prince and the immortal soul.

"But think again," said the witch; "for when once your shape has become like a human being, you can no more be a mermaid. You will never return through the water to your sisters, or to your father's palace again; and if you do not win the love of the prince, so that he is willing to forget his father and mother for your sake, and to love you with his whole soul, and allow the priest to join your hands that you may be man and wife, then you will never have an immortal soul. The first morning after he marries another your heart will break, and you will become foam on the crest of the waves."

"I will do it," said the little mermaid, and she became pale as death.

"But I must be paid also," said the Witch, "and it is not a trifle that I ask. You have the sweetest voice of any who dwell here in the depths of the sea, and you believe that you will be able to charm the prince with it also; but this voice you must give to me; the best thing you possess will I have for the price of my

draught. My own blood must be mixed with it, that it may be as sharp as a two-edged sword."

"But if you take away my voice," said the little mermaid, "what is left for me?"

"Your beautiful form, your graceful walk, and your expressive eyes; surely with these you can enchain a man's heart. Well, have you lost your courage? Put out your little tongue that I may cut it off as my payment; then you shall have the powerful draught."

"It shall be," said the little mermaid.

Then the Witch placed her cauldron on the fire, to prepare the magic draught.

"Cleanliness is a good thing," said she, scouring the vessel with snakes, which she had tied together in a large knot; then she pricked herself in the breast, and let the black blood drop into it. The steam that rose formed itself into such horrible shapes that no one could look at them without fear. Every moment the witch threw something else into the vessel, and when it began to boil, the sound was like the weeping of a crocodile. When at last the magic draught was ready, it looked like the clearest water. "There it is for you," said the Witch. Then she cut off the mermaid's tongue, so that she became dumb, and would never again speak or sing. "If the polypi should seize hold of you as you return through the wood,"

said the witch, "throw over them a few drops of the potion, and their fingers will be torn into a thousand pieces." But the little mermaid had no occasion to do this, for the polypi sprung back in terror when they caught sight of the glittering draught, which shone in her hand like a twinkling star.

So she passed quickly through the wood and the marsh, and between the rushing whirlpools. She saw that in her father's palace the torches in the ball-room were extinguished, and all within asleep; but she did not venture to go in to them, for, now she was dumb and going to leave them for ever, she felt as if her heart would break. She stole into the garden, took a flower from the flower-beds of each of her sisters, kissed her hand a thousand times towards the palace, and then rose up through the dark blue waters.

The sun had not risen when she came in sight of the prince's palace, and approached the beautiful marble steps, but the moon shone clear and bright. Then the little mermaid drank the magic draught, and it seemed as if a two-edged sword went through her delicate body; she fell into a swoon, and lay like one dead. When the sun arose and shone over the sea, she recovered, and felt a sharp pain; but just before her stood the handsome young prince. He fixed his coal-black eyes upon her so earnestly

that she cast down her own, and then became aware that her fish's tail was gone, and that she had as pretty a pair of white legs and tiny feet as any little maiden could have; but she had no clothes, so she wrapped herself in her long, thick hair. The prince asked her who she was, and where she came from; and she looked at him mildly and sorrowfully with her deep blue eyes: but she could not speak. Then he took her by the hand, and led her to the palace. Every step she took was as painful as the witch had said it would be; she felt as if treading upon the points of needles or sharp knives; but she bore it willingly, and stepped as lightly by the prince's side as a soap-bubble, so that he and all who saw her wondered at her graceful, swaying movements. She was very soon arrayed in costly robes of silk and muslin, and was the most beautiful creature in the palace; but she was dumb, and could neither speak nor sing.

Beautiful female slaves, dressed in silk and gold, stepped forward and sang before the prince and his royal parents: one sang better than all the others, and the prince clapped his hands and smiled at her. This was a great sorrow to the little mermaid; she knew how much more sweetly she herself could sing once, and she thought, "Oh, if he could only know that I have given away my voice for ever, to be with him!"

The slaves next performed some pretty fairy-like dances, to the sound of beautiful music. Then the little mermaid raised her lovely white arms, stood on the tips of her toes, and glided over the floor, and danced as no one yet had been able to dance. At each moment her beauty became more revealed, and her expressive eyes appealed more directly to the heart than the songs of the slaves. Every one was enchanted, especially the prince, who called her his little foundling; and she danced again quite readily, to please him, though each time her foot touched the floor it seemed as if she trod on sharp knives.

The prince said she should remain with him always, and she received permission to sleep at his door, on a velvet cushion. He had a page's dress made for her, that she might accompany him on horseback. They rode together through the sweet-scented woods, where the green boughs touched their shoulders, and the little birds sang among the fresh leaves. She climbed with the prince to the tops of high mountains; and although her tender feet bled so that even her steps were marked, she only laughed, and followed him till they could see the clouds beneath them looking like a flock of birds travelling to distant lands. While at the prince's palace, and when all the household were asleep, she would go and sit on the broad marble steps; for it eased her burning feet to bathe

them in the cold sea-water; and then she thought of all those below in the deep.

Once during the night her sisters came up arm-in-arm, singing sorrowfully, as they floated on the water. She beckoned to them, and then they recognised her, and told her how she had grieved them. After that, they came to the same place every night; and once she saw in the distance her old grandmother, who had not been to the surface of the sea for many years, and the old Sea King, her father, with his crown on his head. They stretched out their hands towards her, but they did not venture as near the land as her sisters did.

As the days passed, she loved the prince more fondly, and he loved her as he would love a little child; but it never came into his head to make her his wife: yet, unless he married her, she could not receive an immortal soul; and, on the morning after his marriage with another, she would dissolve into the foam of the sea.

"Do you not love me the best of them all?" the eyes of the little mermaid seemed to say, when he took her in his arms, and kissed her fair forehead.

"Yes, you are dear to me," said the prince; "for you have the best heart, and you are the most devoted to me; and you are like a young maiden whom I once saw, but whom I shall never meet again. I was in a ship that was wrecked, and the waves cast me ashore

near a holy temple, where several young maidens performed the service. The youngest of them found me on the shore, and saved my life. I saw her but twice, and she is the only one in the world whom I could love; but you are like her, and you have almost driven her image out of my mind. She belongs to the holy temple, and my good fortune has sent you to me instead of her; and we will never part."

"Ah, he knows not that it was I who saved his life," thought the little mermaid. "I carried him over the sea to the wood where the temple stands; I sat beneath the foam, and watched till the human beings came to help him. I saw the pretty maiden that he loves better than he loves me;" and the mermaid sighed deeply, but she could not shed tears. "He says the maiden belongs to the holy temple, therefore she will never return to the world. They will meet no more; while I am by his side, and see him every day. I will take care of him, and love him, and give up my life for his sake."

Very soon it was said that the prince must marry, and that the beautiful daughter of a neighbouring king would be his wife, for a fine ship was being fitted out. Although the prince gave out that he merely intended to pay a visit to the king, it was generally supposed that he really went to see his daughter. A great company were to go with him. The little

mermaid smiled, and shook her head. She knew the prince's thoughts better than any of the others.

"I must travel," he had said to her; "I must see this beautiful princess: my parents desire it; but they will not oblige me to bring her home as my bride. I cannot love her; she is not like the beautiful maiden in the temple, whom you resemble. If I were forced to choose a bride, I would rather choose you, my dumb foundling, with those expressive eyes." And then he kissed her rosy mouth, played with her long waving hair, and laid his head on her heart, while she dreamed of human happiness and an immortal soul. "You are not afraid of the sea, my dumb child," said he, as they stood on the deck of the noble ship which was to carry them to the country of the neighbouring king. And then he told her of storm and of calm, of strange fishes in the deep beneath them, and of what the divers had seen there; and she smiled at his description, for she knew better than any one what wonders were at the bottom of the sea.

In the moonlight night, when all on board were asleep, excepting the man at the helm, who was steering, she sat on the deck, gazing down through the clear water. She thought she could distinguish her father's castle, and upon it her aged grandmother, with the silver crown on her head, looking through the rushing tide at the keel of the vessel.

Then her sisters came up on the waves, and gazed at her mournfully, wringing their white hands. She beckoned to them, and smiled, and wanted to tell them how happy and well off she was; but the cabin-boy approached, and when her sisters dived down he thought it was only the foam of the sea which he saw.

The next morning the ship sailed into the harbour of a beautiful town belonging to the king whom the prince was going to visit. The church bells were ringing, and from the high towers sounded a flourish of trumpets; and soldiers, with flying colours and glittering bayonets, lined the roads through which they passed. Every day was a festival; balls and entertainments followed one another.

But the princess had not yet appeared. People said that she was being brought up and educated in a religious house, where she was learning every royal virtue. At last she came. Then the little mermaid, who was very anxious to see whether she was really beautiful, was obliged to acknowledge that she had never seen a more perfect vision of beauty. Her skin was delicately fair, and beneath her long dark eyelashes her laughing blue eyes shone with truth and purity.

"It was you," said the prince, "who saved my life when I lay as if dead on the beach;" and he folded

his blushing bride in his arms. "Oh, I am too happy," said he to the little mermaid; "my fondest hopes are all fulfilled. You will rejoice at my happiness; for your devotion to me is great and sincere."

The little mermaid kissed his hand, and felt as if her heart were already broken. His wedding morning would bring death to her, and she would change into the foam of the sea. All the church bells rang, and the heralds rode about the town proclaiming the betrothal. Perfumed oil was burning in costly silver lamps on every altar. The priests waved the censers, while the bride and bridegroom joined their hands and received the blessing of the bishop. The little mermaid, dressed in silk and gold, held up the bride's train; but her ears heard nothing of the festive music, and her eyes saw not the holy ceremony: she thought of the night of death which was coming to her, and of all she had lost in the world. On the same evening the bride and bridegroom went on board ship; cannons were roaring, flags waving, and in the centre of the ship a costly tent of purple and gold had been erected. It contained elegant couches, for the reception of the bridal pair during the night. The ship, with swelling sails and a favourable wind, glided away smoothly and lightly over the calm sea. When it grew dark a number of coloured lamps were lit, and the sailors danced merrily on the deck. The little

mermaid could not help thinking of her first rising out of the sea, when she had seen similar festivities and joy; and she joined in the dance, poised herself in the air as a swallow when he pursues his prey, and all present cheered her with wonder. She had never danced so elegantly before. Her tender feet felt as if cut with sharp knives, but she cared not for it; a sharper pang had pierced through her heart. She knew this was the last evening she should ever see the prince, for whom she had forsaken her kindred and her home; she had given up her beautiful voice, and suffered unheard-of pain daily for him, while he knew nothing of it. This was the last evening that she would breathe the same air with him, or gaze on the starry sky and the deep sea; an eternal night, without a thought or a dream, awaited her; she had no soul, and now she could never win one. All was joy and gaiety on board ship till long after midnight; she laughed and danced with the rest, while the thoughts of death were in her heart. The prince kissed his beautiful bride, while she played with his raven hair, till they went arm-in-arm to rest in the splendid tent. Then all became still on board the ship; the helmsman, alone awake, stood at the helm. The little mermaid leaned her white arms on the edge of the vessel, and looked towards the east for the first blush of morning, for that first ray of the dawn which

was to be her death. She saw her sisters rising out of the flood: they were as pale as herself; but their long beautiful hair waved no more in the wind, it had been cut off.

"We have given our hair to the Witch," said they, "to obtain help for you, that you may not die to-night. She has given us a knife: here it is—see, it is very sharp. Before the sun rises you must plunge it into the heart of the prince; when the warm blood falls upon your feet they will grow together again, and form into a fish's tail, and you will be once more a mermaid, and return to us to live out your three hundred years before you die and change into the salt sea foam. Haste, then; he or you must die before sunrise. Our old grandmother mourns so for you, that her white hair is falling off from sorrow, as ours fell under the Witch's scissors. Kill the prince, and come back; hasten: do you not see the first red streaks in the sky? In a few minutes the sun will rise, and you must die." And then they sighed deeply and mournfully, and sank down beneath the waves.

The little mermaid drew back the crimson curtain of the tent, and beheld the fair bride with her head resting on the prince's breast. She bent down and kissed his fair brow, then looked at the sky on which the rosy dawn grew brighter and brighter; then she

glanced at the sharp knife, and again fixed her eyes on the prince who whispered the name of his bride in his dreams. *She* was in his thoughts, and the knife trembled in the hand of the little mermaid: then she flung it far away from her into the waves; the water turned red where it fell, and the drops that spurted up looked like blood. She cast one more lingering, half-fainting glance at the prince, and then threw herself from the ship into the sea, and thought her body was dissolving into foam. The sun rose above the waves, and his warm rays fell on the cold form of the little mermaid, who did not feel as if she were dying. She saw the bright sun, and all around her floated hundreds of transparent beautiful beings; she could see through them the white sails of the ships, and the red clouds in the sky; their speech was melodious, but too ethereal to be heard by mortal ears, as they were also unseen by mortal eyes. The little mermaid perceived that she had a body like theirs, and that she continued to rise higher and higher out of the foam. "Where am I?" asked she, and her voice sounded ethereal, as the voices of those who were with her; no earthly music could imitate it.

"Among the daughters of the air," answered one of them. "A mermaid has not an immortal soul, nor can she obtain one unless she wins the love of a human being. On the power of another hangs her

eternal destiny. But the daughters of the air, although they do not possess an immortal soul, can, by their good deeds, procure one for themselves. We fly to warm countries, and cool the sultry air that destroys mankind with the pestilence. We carry the perfume of the flowers to spread health and restoration. After we have striven for three hundred years to do all the good in our power, we receive an immortal soul, and take part in the happiness of mankind. You, poor little mermaid, have tried with your whole heart to do as we are doing; you have suffered and endured and raised yourself to the spirit-world by your good deeds; and now, by striving for three hundred years in the same way, you may obtain an immortal soul."

The little mermaid lifted her glorified eyes towards the sun, and felt them, for the first time, filling with tears. On the ship, in which she had left the prince, there were life and noise; she saw him and his beautiful bride searching for her; sorrowfully they gazed at the pearly foam, as if they knew she had thrown herself into the waves. Unseen she kissed the forehead of the bride, and fanned the prince, and then mounted with the other children of the air to a rosy cloud that floated through the ether.

"After three hundred years, thus shall we float into the kingdom of heaven," said she. "And we may

even get there sooner," whispered one of her companions. "Unseen we can enter the houses of men, where there are children, and for every day on which we find a good child, who is the joy of his parents and deserves their love, our time of probation is shortened. The child does not know, when we fly through the room, that we smile with joy at his good conduct, for we can count one year less of our three hundred years. But when we see a naughty or a wicked child, we shed tears of sorrow, and for every tear a day is added to our time of trial!"

THE THREE BROTHER BEASTS

THERE was, once upon a time, a King of a country called Verdecolle, who had three daughters, each one more lovely than the other. The three sons of the neighbouring King of Velprato fell very much in love with these beauties, but just as the weddings were going to come off, the three Princes fell under the power of a wicked Fairy, who turned them all into different animals; and the father of the Princesses very naturally refused in consequence to let his daughters marry them.

Thereupon the eldest Prince, who had been changed into an Eagle with magic power, summoned all the birds of the air to his aid. They came in swarms—sparrows, larks, thrushes, starlings, and every other bird you can think of; and the Eagle commanded them to devastate the whole country, not leaving a leaf or blossom on any tree.

The second Prince, who had been changed into a Stag, called the goats, rabbits, hares, pigs, and all

the other four-footed beasts, and ordered them to lay waste all the fields and ploughed land, and not to leave a single root or blade of grass.

The third Prince, who had been changed into a Dolphin, assembled all the monsters of the deep, and raised such a storm on the coasts of the country, that all the ships and trading vessels were lost and shattered to pieces.

When the King saw that the only way to put an end to these troubles and disasters was to give the three Beasts his daughters in marriage, he gave in at last, though with much foreboding and many tears.

When the Eagle, the Stag, and the Dolphin arrived to carry their brides off, their mother gave each of the Princesses a ring, saying as she did so: "My dear daughters, keep these rings carefully and always wear them, for if you separate and do not meet again for many years, or if at any time you come across any one of your own blood, you will always recognise each other by these talismans."

So they took their departure and set out on their different ways. The Eagle carried Fabiella, who was the eldest sister, off to a lofty mountain above the clouds, where it never rained, but the sun shone perpetually, and here he gave her a magnificent palace, and treated her like a queen.

The Stag bore Vasta, the second sister, away with

him, right into the heart of a dark wood, and here he lived with her in the most beautiful house and garden you can imagine.

The Dolphin swam with Rita, who was the youngest sister, on his back, right across the sea, till he came to a huge rock, and on the rock stood a house in which three crowned kings might have lived in comfort and luxury.

In the meantime, the Queen gave birth to a beautiful little boy, whom she called Tittone. When he was fifteen years old he determined to set out into the world and seek tidings of his three sisters, for his mother did nothing but bewail their loss and the unhappy fate which had given them three Beasts for their husbands. At first his father and mother could not be prevailed on to let him go, but at length they yielded to his entreaties, and, having provided him with a suitable escort and with a ring the same as his sisters, they took a tender farewell of him. So the young Prince set forth on his travels, and wandered for many years through all the different countries of the world without ever coming on a trace of the three Princesses. At last one day he came to the mountain where Fabiella and the Eagle lived, and when he saw their palace Tittone stood still, lost in admiration of its marble pillars and alabaster walls, its windows of crystal and roof of glittering gold.

As soon as Fabiella saw him she called him to her and asked him who he was, where he came from, and what business had led him thither. When the Prince had described his native land, his father and his mother, and answered all the Princess's questions, Fabiella recognised him as her brother, and she became quite certain of the fact when she compared his ring with the one she always wore. She embraced her brother tenderly; but, fearful lest her husband should object to his arrival, she hid him in a cupboard.

When the Eagle came home that evening Fabiella confided to him that she was very home-sick, and that she had been suddenly seized with a strong desire to see her own people once more. The Eagle answered: "Try and get over this wish, my dear wife, for it cannot be fulfilled till I become a man again."

"Well, then," said Fabiella, "if it is impossible for me to go to them, let us invite one of my relations to come and visit us here."

"With all my heart," replied the Eagle, "but I don't think anyone would take the trouble to come such a long way to see you."

"But suppose someone had come, and was in the palace at this moment, would you object?" asked his wife.

"Of course not," answered the Eagle. "Any rela-

tion of yours would be as dear to me as the apple of my eye."

When Fabiella heard these words she took heart, and, going to the cupboard, she opened it, and showed the Eagle her brother hidden there.

The Eagle greeted him warmly, and said: "You are most welcome, and it is a great pleasure to me to make your acquaintance. I hope you will consider yourself quite at home in my palace, and ask for anything you want." And he gave orders that everything was to be done for the comfort and entertainment of his brother-in-law.

But after Tittone had stayed on the mountain for a fortnight, he remembered that he had still to find his other two sisters. He therefore asked his sister and her husband for permission to depart from their hospitable roof; but before bidding him farewell, the Eagle gave him one of his feathers, saying as he did so: "Take this feather, dear Tittone, and treasure it carefully, for it will be of great use to you some day. If any misfortune should overtake you, throw it on the ground, and call out 'Help, help!' and I will come to you." Tittone took the feather and put it carefully away in his purse; then he took a tender leave of his sister and the Eagle, thanking them a thousand times for their goodness and hospitality to him.

After a long and weary journey he came at length to the wood where the Stag lived with Vasta; and as he was nearly starving with hunger he went into the garden and began to eat the fruit he found there. His sister soon noticed him and recognised him, in the same way that Fabiella had done; she hastened to introduce him to her husband, who received him in the most friendly manner, and entertained him sumptuously.

After spending a fortnight with Vasta and her husband, Tittone determined to set out and look for his third sister; but before his departure the Stag gave him one of his hairs with the same words that the Eagle had spoken when he gave him one of his feathers to guard carefully.

So Tittone departed on his way, and with the money the Eagle and Stag had given him he wandered to the uttermost parts of the world, where the sea at last put an end to his travels by land, and he was obliged to take ship and search through the islands for his third sister. At length, after many days, he came to the rock where Rita lived with the Dolphin. Hardly had he stepped on land when his sister perceived him and recognised him at once, as the others had done. His brother-in-law gave him a warm welcome, and when, after a short time, Tittone expressed his desire to return home once more to his father and

mother, the Dolphin gave him one of his scales with the same words that the Eagle and Stag had spoken when they gave him the feather and hair. So the young Prince took ship again, and when he reached the land he mounted a horse and rode on his way.

But he had hardly ridden a mile from the coast when he came to a gloomy wood overgrown with thick brushwood and rank weeds. The Prince forced his way through it as best he could, and at last reached a lake with a high stone tower in the middle of it, at one of the windows of which sat a lovely maiden with a terrible-looking Dragon asleep at her feet. As soon as she perceived the Prince, she called out in a pitiful voice:

"Oh! beautiful youth, Heaven has sent you to rescue me from my sad fate; I implore you to free me from the clutches of this horrible monster, who has carried me away from my father, the King of Merovalle, and has shut me up in this gloomy tower, where I am nearly dead with loneliness and terror."

"Woe is me," answered the Prince, "but what can I do to help you, lovely maiden, for what mortal could ever cross that lake? and who could face this terrible Dragon, who spreads terror and desolation wherever he goes? But wait a little, perhaps I may be able to summon other help to your aid." And with these words he threw the feather, the hair, and the scale,

With a terrible looking dragon at her feet

which his three brothers-in-law had given him, on the ground, calling out at the same time: "Help! help! help!"

In a moment the Eagle, the Stag, and the Dolphin appeared before him, and cried in one voice: "Here we are. What are your commands?"

Tittone, who was overjoyed at their appearance, exclaimed: "I desire that this poor Princess should be freed from the clutches of that Dragon, and that I should carry her home with me as my bride."

"Very well," answered the Eagle, "all shall be done as you desire"; and turning to the Stag he said, "let us lose no time, but let us strike while the iron is hot!"

With these words the Eagle gave a shrill cry, and in one moment the air was black with a flight of vultures, who flew into the window of the tower, and seizing the beautiful Princess, they bore her over to the spot where the Prince and his brothers-in-law stood. And if the maiden looked as fair as the moon in the distance, when you saw her near she was as beautiful and radiant as the sun.

But while Tittone was embracing her, and saying all manner of pretty things to his fair bride, the Dragon awoke, and flying out of the window he set upon Tittone, intending to kill him on the spot. But in a second the Stag caused a quantity of lions, tigers,

panthers, bears, and wild cats to appear, who sprang upon the Dragon and tore him to pieces with their claws.

When Tittone and the Princess saw that their enemy was dead for ever, they determined to leave the place as soon as possible, but before they started the Dolphin said:

"I too would like to do something for you." And in order that no trace should remain of the grim castle where the Princess had spent such unhappy hours, he caused the waters of the lake to overflow, and to beat so violently against the tower that it fell, and the ruins disappeared in the waves.

Tittone thanked his brothers-in-law warmly for having thus rescued his beautiful bride, but the Beasts replied: "Our thanks are rather due to the Princess, because it is through her that we are able once more to assume our human forms. At our births, a wicked Fairy, who owed our mother a grudge, condemned us, when we grew up, to go about the world in the shape of three beasts, until we should have rescued a King's daughter from some great danger; the longed-for moment has come at last, and already we feel new life in our breasts and fresh blood flowing through our veins," and even as they were speaking, they turned into three beautiful young men, who, each in turn, embraced their brother-in-law, and made low bows to

the Princess, who was nearly beside herself with joy and amazement.

Then Tittone spoke with a sigh: "Ah! why can my poor father and mother not share this joy with us? What would they not give to see three such charming and beautiful sons-in-law?"

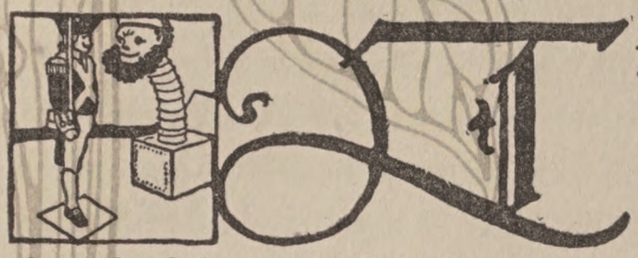
"We will go to them at once," answered the three Princes; "but first we must go and fetch our wives, so let us lose no time in setting forth on our journey."

But as they could not go on foot, and as they had no means of conveyance, except Tittone's one old horse, the brothers commanded a chariot to appear drawn by four lions, in which they all five seated themselves. They travelled all through the night, and with such speed that they came next day to the various places where the wives of the three Beast-brothers were waiting for them.

After much rejoicing and embracing, the whole eight of them continued their journey to the Kingdom of Verdecolle, where the King and Queen received their long-lost children—with what joy you can imagine! which was only increased when they perceived their sons-in-law in their human shape, and the beautiful bride Tittone had brought back with him. They sent at once to tell the Kings of Velprato and Merovalle of the good fortune that had befallen their

children, and invited them to a feast, the like of which for splendour and magnificence had never been seen before, and all the woes and troubles of the past were forgotten in the rejoicing and merrymaking of the present.

THE BRAVE TIN SOLDIER



THERE were once five-and-twenty tin soldiers, who were all brothers, for they had been made out of the same old tin spoon. They shouldered arms and looked straight before them and wore a splendid uniform, red and blue. The first thing in the world they ever heard were the words "Tin soldiers!" uttered by a little boy, who clapped his hands with delight when the lid of the box, in which they lay, was taken off. They were given him for a birthday present, and he stood at the table to set them up. The soldiers were all exactly alike, except one, who had only one leg; he had been left to the last, and then there was not enough of the melted tin to finish him, so they made him to stand firmly on one leg, and this caused him to be very remarkable.

The table on which the tin soldiers stood was covered with other playthings, but the most attractive to the eye was a pretty little paper castle. Through the small windows the rooms could be seen. In front of

the castle a number of little trees surrounded a piece of looking-glass, which was intended to represent a transparent lake. Swans, made of wax, swam on the lake, and were reflected in it. All this was very pretty, but the prettiest of all was a tiny little lady, who stood at the open door of the castle; she also was made of paper, and she wore a dress of clear muslin, with a narrow blue ribbon over her shoulders just like a scarf. In front of this was fixed a glittering tinsel rose, as large as her whole face. The little lady was a dancer, and she stretched out both her arms, and raised one of her legs so high that the tin soldier could not see it at all, and he thought that she, like himself, had only one leg. "That is the wife for me," he thought; "but she is too grand, and lives in a castle, while I have only a box to live in, five and twenty of us all together; that is no place for her. Still I must try and make her acquaintance."

Then he laid himself at full length on the table behind a snuff-box that stood upon it, so that he could peep at the little delicate lady, who continued to stand on one leg without losing her balance. When evening came, the other tin soldiers were all placed in the box, and the people of the house went to bed. Then the playthings began to have their own games together, to pay visits, to have sham fights, and to

give balls. The tin soldiers rattled in their box; they wanted to get out and join the amusements, but they could not open the lid. The nut-crackers played at leap-frog, and the pencil jumped about the table. There was such a noise that the canary woke up and began to talk, and in poetry, too. Only the tin soldier and the dancer remained in their places. She stood on tiptoe, with her arms stretched out, as firmly as he did on his one leg. He never took his eyes from her for even a moment. The clock struck twelve, and, with a bounce, up sprang the lid of the snuff-box; but, instead of snuff, there jumped up a little black goblin; for the snuff-box was a toy puzzle.

"Tin soldier," said the goblin, "don't wish for what does not belong to you."

But the tin soldier pretended not to hear.

"Very well wait till to-morrow then," said the goblin.

When the children came in the next morning they placed the tin soldier in the window. Now, whether it was the goblin who did it, or the draught, is not known, but the window flew open, and out fell the tin soldier, heels over head, from the third story, into the street beneath. It was a terrible fall, for he came head downwards, his helmet and his bayonet stuck in between the flag-stones, and his one leg up in the air. The servant-maid and the little boy went down stairs

directly to look for him; but he was nowhere to be seen, although once they nearly trod upon him. If he had called out, "Here I am," it would have been all right; but he was too proud to cry out for help while he wore a uniform.

Presently it began to rain, and the drops fell faster and faster, till there was a heavy shower. When it was over, two boys happened to pass by, and one of them said, "Look, there is a tin soldier. He ought to have a boat to sail in."

So they made a boat out of a newspaper, and placed the tin soldier in it, and sent him sailing down the gutter, while the two boys ran by the side of it, and clapped their hands. Good gracious, what large waves arose in that gutter! and how fast the stream rolled on! for the rain had been very heavy. The paper boat rocked up and down, and turned itself round sometimes so quickly that the tin soldier trembled; yet he remained firm; his countenance did not change; he looked straight before him, and shouldered his musket. Suddenly the boat shot under a bridge which formed part of a drain, and then it was as dark as the tin soldier's box.

"Where am I going now?" thought he. "This is the black goblin's fault, I am sure. Ah, well, if the little lady were only here with me in the boat, I should not care for the darkness."

Suddenly there appeared a great water-rat who lived in the drain.

"Have you a passport?" asked the rat; "give it to me at once." But the tin soldier remained silent and held his musket tighter than ever. The boat sailed on, and the rat followed it. How he did gnash his teeth and cry out to the bits of wood and straw, "Stop him, stop him; he has not paid toll, and has not shown his pass!" But the stream rushed on stronger and stronger. The tin soldier could already see daylight shining where the arch ended. Then he heard a roaring sound quite terrible enough to frighten the bravest man. At the end of the tunnel the drain fell into a large canal over a steep place, which made it as dangerous for him as a waterfall would be to us. He was too close to it to stop, so the boat rushed on, and the poor tin soldier could only hold himself as stiffly as possible, without moving an eyelid, to show that he was not afraid. The boat whirled round three or four times, and then filled with water to the very edge; nothing could save it from sinking. He now stood up to his neck in water, while deeper and deeper sank the boat, and the paper became soft and loose with the wet, till at last the water closed over the soldier's head. He thought of the elegant little dancer whom he should never see again, and the words of the song sounded in his ears—

"Farewell warrior! ever brave!
Drifting onward to thy grave."

Then the paper boat fell to pieces, and the soldier sank into the water, and immediately afterwards was swallowed up by a great fish. Oh, how dark it was inside the fish! a great deal darker than in the tunnel, and narrower, too, but the tin soldier continued firm, and lay at full length, shouldering his musket. The fish swam to and fro, making the most wonderful movements, but at last he became quite still. After a while a flash of lightning seemed to pass through him, and then the daylight appeared, and a voice cried out, "I declare, here is a tin soldier!" The fish had been caught, taken to the market and sold to the cook, who took him into the kitchen and cut him open with a large knife. She picked up the soldier and held him by the waist between her finger and thumb, and carried him into the room. They were all anxious to see this wonderful soldier who had travelled about inside a fish; but he was not at all proud.

They placed him on the table, and—how many curious things do happen in the world!—there he was in the very same room from the window of which he had fallen, and there were the same children, the same playthings standing on the table, and the pretty castle with the elegant little dancer at the door; she still balanced herself on one leg, and held up the other, so she was as firm as himself. It touched the

tin soldier so much to see her that he almost wept tin tears, but he kept them back. He only looked at her, and they both remained silent.

Presently one of the little boys took up the tin soldier, and threw him into the stove.

He had no reason for doing so, therefore it must have been the fault of the black goblin who lived in the snuff-box. The flames lighted up the tin soldier, as he stood, the heat was very terrible, but whether it proceeded from the real fire or from the fire of love he could not tell. Then he could see that the bright colours were faded from his uniform, but whether they had been washed off during his journey, or from the effects of his sorrow, no one could say. He looked at the little lady, and she looked at him. He felt himself melting away, but he still remained firm with his gun on his shoulder. Suddenly the door of the room flew open, and the draught of air caught up the little dancer; she fluttered like a sylph right into the stove by the side of the tin soldier, and was instantly in flames and was gone.

The tin soldier melted down into a lump, and the next morning, when the maid-servant took the ashes out of the stove, she found him in the shape of a little tin heart. But of the little dancer nothing remained but the tinsel rose, which was burnt to a cinder.

THE BOY WHO WANTED TO MARRY

THERE was once a woman who had so lazy and stupid a son that he never would take to anything useful, but he was fond enough of singing and dancing, and he did that as long as the day lasted, and even far into the night. But the longer this sort of thing went on, the harder it became for the woman. The boy grew, and he must have food enough to satisfy him, and his clothes cost more and more every year, as he grew bigger, and they did not last very long either, I can tell you, for he danced and jumped about both in wood and field. At last the woman thought she could bear it no longer; so she said to the boy one day that he must now begin to go to work, and take to some regular employment, or both of them would be famished. But the boy had no fancy for work, and said he would rather woo the daughter of the old woman in the nook, for if he got her he could live well and happy all his days, singing and dancing and

never bothering himself with work. His mother thought this might perhaps do, so she fitted him out to the best of her ability, that he might look fairly well when he got to the old woman in the nook, and then off he set on his way.

When he came out the sun was shining warm and pleasantly, but it had rained in the night, so that the ground was soft, and all the moss holes were full of water. The boy took the shortest way, and sang and jumped as he always did; but as he was running and jumping he came to a bog with a log laid over it, and he was about to make a spring from the log over the moss hole to a tuft, so that he should not dirty his shoes, but just as he set his foot on the tuft it went plump down, and he with it, and he did not stop until he was in a horrid, ugly, black hole. At first he could see nothing, but when he had been there a time he caught a glimpse of a rat that strutted and waggled about with a bunch of keys on its tail.

"Is that you, my boy?" said the rat. "Thank you for coming to see me; I have long waited for you. You have come here to woo me, and you are very anxious for it, I can see; but you must have patience a little longer, for I shall have a grand wedding, and I am not ready for it yet, but I will do my best so that it may soon be."

When she had said this she brought out some egg

shells with some kind of small food in them, such as rats like to eat, and set them before him.

"You must have something to eat; you must be both tired and hungry," she said.

But the boy didn't eat; he had no fancy for that kind of stuff.

"I wish I were only well out of this and up again," thought he; but he said nothing.

"Now you want to go home again, I know," said the rat. "You are longing for the wedding, I see, and I will hasten matters as much as I can. You must take this linen thread with you, and when you get up you must not look about, but go straight home; and on the road you must say nothing but 'short before and long behind.'" So saying she gave him the linen thread.

"Thank goodness," said the boy, when he got to the surface; "I'll never go down there again."

He had the thread in his hand, and he ran and sang as usual; but though he thought no more about the rat hole, he had got the thing into his head, and continued to sing:

"Short before and long behind!
Short before and long behind!"

When he got home and into the porch, he turned round, and there lay many hundreds of yards of the

whitest linen cloth, so fine that the cleverest weavers could not weave it finer.

"Mother, mother, come out!" he shouted.

The woman came running out and asked what was the matter. When she saw the cloth, which reached as far as she could see and a bit farther, she could not believe her eyes until the boy told her all about it. But when she heard it, and felt the cloth between her fingers, she was so glad that she began to sing and dance, too. So she took the cloth and cut it up, and made shirts for her son and socks for herself; the rest she took to the town and sold, and they lived finely while the money lasted. When it was done, and the woman had no more food in the house, she said to her son that now he really must begin to go to work, and to take to some regular employment, or there was nothing else for it, they would both be starved to death. But the boy would rather go to the old woman in the nook and woo her daughter. The mother thought he might do worse, he was well clothed now, and was not so bad-looking either, so she went to work to fit him up in the best way she could, and he got out his new shoes and brushed them till they shone like a looking-glass, and when he had done that, off he set.

Things happened exactly like the time before: when he got out the sun shone warm and pleasantly, but it had rained in the night, so that it was soft and

dirty, and all the moss holes were full of water. The boy took the shortest way to the woman in the nook, and he sang and ran as he always did. He went a different way; but, as he was jumping and running, he came to the log over the marsh again, and he was about to jump from it over a moss hole to a clump on the other side, so as not to soil his shoes, when plump it went, just as he set his foot on it, and he did not stop going down till he was in the horrid, ugly, dark hole again. At first he could not see anything, but when he had been there a time he caught a glimpse of a rat with a bunch of keys to its tail, going about there, strutting and waggling.

"Are you there, my boy?" said the rat. "Welcome again! It was kind of you to wish to see me so soon; you are quite impatient, I can see; but you must endure a little longer yet, for I am still short of some of the things for the wedding; but when you come next time all shall be ready."

When she had said this she brought out several sorts of chopped-up food in egg shells, such as rats are used to eat and delight in, but the boy thought that it looked liked broken meat, and he said he had no appetite.

"If only I were out of this and up again!" thought he; but he said nothing.

"Now you are wanting to go up again, I can see,"

said the rat, after a time. "But I will get ready for the wedding as quickly as I can. And now you can take with you this piece of woollen thread; but when you get up again you must not look about you, but go straight home, and on the way you must not say anything but 'short before and long behind,'" and then she gave the wool into his hand.

"Thank goodness that I am out of that," said the boy to himself; "you won't catch me there again." Then he sang and he ran as he was used to do. He never thought about the rat hole again, but he had got into the swing of it, and kept on singing:

"Short before and long behind!
Short before and long behind!"

and he kept it up all the way. When he neared home he began to look about him; there lay the finest woollen cloth, ever so many hundred yards—a mile long indeed—and it was so fine that no one, even in a town, could have finer cloth on his back.

"Mother, mother, come out, come out!" called the boy.

The woman came to the door, clapped her hands together, and was almost ready to faint for joy when she saw all the beautiful cloth; and then the boy had to tell her how he got it, and how everything had happened, from first to last. After that they had a

fine time of it, you may be sure. The boy got new, fine clothes, and the woman went to the town and sold piece after piece, and got a lot of money for it, and she furbished up the cottage, and became herself quite smart in her old days, as if she were a lady. They lived well in everything; but the money at last was ended, and there came a day when the woman had no more food in the house, so she said to her son that now he really must go to work and get some regular employment, or they would both be starved together. But the boy said that it would be better to go to the old woman in the nook, and woo her daughter, than that. This time his mother thought the same, and did not say a word against it to the boy, for he had new, fine clothes now, and he looked so well that she thought it quite impossible that such a smart lad should get a "no." So she fitted him out and touched him up as best she could, and he himself polished up his new shoes so splendidly that he could see his face in them, and when he had done that he set off. This time he did not take the shortest way, but made a long round of it, for he was determined not to go down the hole again, he was so tired of the rat's strutting and waggling, and of the everlasting talk of the wedding. The weather and the state of the roads were exactly as on the two former occasions. The sun shone so that it flashed in the mud and the marshes, and the

boy sang and ran as he always did; but whilst he ran and jumped, and before he knew anything about it, he found himself on the same log over the moss again. So he had to spring over the moss hole to a tuft in order that he should not soil his bright, clean shoes. Plump he went again, and did not stop till he was down in the same horrid, dark, ugly hole as before. At first he was glad, because he could see nothing, but after a time he caught a glimpse of the horrid rat with the bunch of keys at the end of its tail.

"Good day, my boy," said the rat, "you are welcome again; I see you cannot remain away from me long! Thank you for that; everything is ready for the wedding now, and we will set out for the church directly."

"We'll see about that," thought the boy, but he said nothing.

The rat squeaked, and forth there tumbled a lot of little rats and mice from all the corners, and six large rats came drawing a frying-pan, two mice sat behind as footmen, and two in front to drive; some sat in the pan, and the rat with the bunch of keys sat among them.

"The road is a little narrow here," she said to the boy. "You must walk by the side of the carriage, please, my boy, till the way gets broader, then you shall sit inside with me."

"Likely indeed!" thought the boy. "If I were only well out of this I would have done with this rubbish," but he said nothing. He followed as well as he could; sometimes he had to creep, and sometimes to bend his back well, for the road was very narrow; but when it got broader he went before and looked for an opportunity to take to his heels. But while he was walking on he heard a clear, beautiful voice behind him say: "Now the road is good; come, my friend, and get up into the carriage."

The boy turned quickly around, and nearly lost his senses at the sight; there stood the most charming carriage with six white horses, and in the carriage sat a maiden as fair and beautiful as the sun, and around her sat other damsels as pretty and gentle as the stars. She was a princess, and she and her playfellows had been enchanted. Now they were free, because he had come down to them and had not contradicted them in anything.

"Come, now!" said the princess. So the boy got up into the carriage and drove with her to the church. When they came away again the princess said, "Now we will go to my house first, and I will send a messenger for your mother."

"That is all right," thought the boy—he said nothing now, either—but he thought it would be better to be off to his mother than to go down to the dark rat

hole. But just then they came to a golden castle, and went in, and that was where they were to remain. And so a splendid carriage with six horses was sent for the woman, and when it came back they commenced the wedding festivities. They lasted fourteen days, and perhaps they are going on yet. Let us be quick, so that we shall be in time too, to drink to the bridegroom and to dance with the bride.

THE DEER OF THE FIVE COLOURS

IN India there lived a deer whose skin was of the five colours and whose horns were white. He dwelt in the recesses of the mountains and no one knew of his existence. Near the mountains flowed a great river. A crow also lived on the mountains who was very friendly with the deer. It happened that a man fell into the river and as he was drowning he called out—"Save me!" The deer, hearing him, was filled with pity, and, swimming out into the river, saved him.

The man rejoiced in being saved and rubbed his hands together saying: "How can I show my gratitude?"

The deer answered: "I only ask that you will never tell any one of my existence in these mountains. As I am of the five colours if any one knew of my existence, he would cross the river and I should be killed: it is my fear that makes me live in the recesses of these mountains. No one knows of me, but when I

heard your cry, forgetting where I was going, I went to your help." The man seeing this was true, promised, again and yet again, never to tell any one. And he returned to his village and though days and months passed, he told no one.

Now the Queen of the country dreamt a dream in which she saw a deer of the five colours with white horns. Waking from her sleep she told the King that she had dreamt such and such a dream, and she said to him: "Now this deer must exist. Oh, King, make search for it and give it to me."

The King issued an order that if any one found the deer of the five colours, gold, silver and precious stones, with land, should be given to him.

Now when the man who had been saved, heard the King's command, he went to the court and said: "The coloured deer for which you seek lives in the recesses of the mountains: send huntsmen with me, for I know the place."

The King, greatly pleased, went forth to the mountains himself, taking many huntsmen with him; and the man went as guide.

The deer was lying in a cave and knew nothing of this: but the friendly crow, seeing what was happening, called out and pecked his ear, and said: "The King of the country is coming with many huntsmen to kill you: he has surrounded the mountains; there

is no escape. What is to be done!" and weeping, he flew away.

The startled deer walked up to the place where the King was with his huntsmen; they fixed their arrows and prepared to shoot. But the King said: "There must be some reason for the deer coming thus unfrightened. Do not shoot."

The deer drew near and knelt down in front of the King's palanquin, and said: "Because of the colour of my skin, I have lived thus in the mountains. Oh, King, how came you to know my dwelling-place?"

Then the King answered: "The man with the spot on his face, who stands beside my carriage, told me."

The deer, seeing the man who stood beside the carriage, knew that it was he whom he had saved, and said to him: "When I saved your life, you said that you could not repay me; then I asked you not to tell any one of my existence; and you swore again and again not to do so. Now forgetting your obligation, you come to kill me. When you were drowning in the water I swam across to save you, taking no thought of my own life. Do you remember your boundless joy?" So saying, the deer wept tears of anger.

Then the King, also weeping, said: "You are only an animal, yet you showed mercy and saved this man; he, from desire of gain, forgets his obligation; there-

fore we must call him an animal. It is the duty of a man to show gratitude."

Seizing the man, they cut off his head in the presence of the deer. Then the King said: "From now it is forbidden to hunt deer; and if any one kills a single deer, disobeying this command, he shall suffer capital punishment." And there was peace and prosperity in the land.

FAIR GOLDILOCKS

THERE was once a king's daughter who was so beautiful that nothing in the whole world could be compared with her. And because she was so beautiful they called her Princess Goldilocks; for her hair was finer than gold, wonderfully fair, and it fell in ringlets to her feet. Her only covering for her head was her curly hair and a garland of flowers; her dresses were embroidered with diamonds and pearls; and no one could look on her without loving her.

In a neighbouring country there lived a young king who was not married, and who was very handsome and very rich.

When the fame of fair Goldilocks reached him, before he had ever set eyes on her he was already so much in love that he could neither eat nor drink for thinking of her. He determined to send an ambassador to ask her hand in marriage. He had a magnificent coach made for the occasion; and, giving the ambassador more than a hundred horses and lackeys,

he charged him well to bring the princess home with him.

When the ambassador had taken leave of the king and had gone away, nothing was spoken of at the court but his mission; and the king, who felt assured of Goldilock's consent, had beautiful dresses made for her, and wonderful fittings for the palace. While the workmen were making preparations anent her coming, the ambassador reached her court and delivered his message. But whether she was not in a good humour that day, or whether the offer was not to her liking, she told the messenger that she thanked the king but that she had no desire to marry.

The ambassador left the princess's court very downhearted at not being able to bring her home with him. He took back all the gifts the king had sent her; for she had been well brought up, and knew that girls should not accept presents from boys. So she would not take the fine diamonds and all the rest of the things; but, so as not to give offence, she accepted a little packet of English pins.

When the ambassador reached the king's capital, where he was waited for with the greatest impatience, everybody was in deep distress because fair Goldilocks was not with him. The king began to cry like a child, and it was in vain they tried to comfort him. Now at the court was a young lad, who was fair as the day,

and indeed in the whole kingdom there was no one so handsome. His charms and his ready wit earned him his name of Avenant. Everybody liked him except those who were jealous that the king showed him favour and made him his daily confidant.

Avenant, hearing them speak of the ambassador's return and of how his embassy had been in vain, said, without thinking very much what he was saying: "If the king had sent me to Princess Goldilocks I am sure she would have come back with me." Then the mischief-makers hastened to the king and said to him: "Your majesty, what do you think Avenant has been saying?—That if you had sent him to the princess he would have brought her back! Who ever heard of such impudence? He thinks he is handsomer than you, and that she would have fallen so much in love with him that she would have followed him anywhere." And now the king flew into such a furious passion that he lost all control of himself. "Ha! ha!" said he. "This spoilt monkey laughs at my misfortune! He thinks he is the better man! Go; shut him up in my great tower, and let him die of hunger."

The king's guards went to fetch Avenant, who by this time had forgotten entirely what he had said, and dragged him to prison with all kinds of violence. The poor boy had only a miserable heap of straw for a bed; and he would have died had it not been for a little

stream that flowed along through the bottom of the tower, and of which he drank a little to cool his mouth, which was parched by hunger.

One day, when he was sighing in despair, and was saying, "What does the king blame me for? He has not a more loyal subject than myself, and I have never done him any harm," the king passed hard by the tower. Hearing the voice of him whom he had loved so much, he stopped to listen, in spite of the efforts of those who were with him, who, hating Avenant, said: "Why does your majesty waste your time? Do you not know he is a rascal?" But the king answered: "Let me alone. I want to listen." At the sound of his laments, tears filled the king's eyes, and he opened the door of the tower and called him. Avenant came forward in deep distress, and, throwing himself on his knees and kissing the king's feet, he said: "What have I done that your majesty should treat me so cruelly?" "You laughed at me and at my ambassador," said the king. "You said that if I had sent you to the Princess Goldilocks you would have brought her back." "It is true, your majesty," replied Avenant, "that I should have made her so thoroughly realise your good qualities that I feel sure she would not have refused her consent, and in saying that, I said nothing that should have displeased you." The king saw that, after all, Avenant was in the right.

and, looking with contempt on those who had slandered his favourite, took him away with him, deeply repenting all he had made him suffer.

After having regaled him with a fine supper, he called him into his private room, and said: "Avenant, I am still in love with fair Goldilocks, but I don't know what to do to gain her consent. I should like to send you to see if you could succeed." Avenant replied that he was ready to obey him in everything, and that he would set out next day. "Ah," said the king, "but I wish to have a fine equipage prepared for you." "That is not needful," he answered. "I want only a good horse and letters from you." The king embraced him, so delighted was he with his eagerness to set out.

It was on a Monday morning he took leave of the king and of his friends to go on his errand, all by himself, quite simply and quietly. He did nothing but think of the means he would use to persuade Goldilocks to marry the king. In his pocket he carried a writing-tablet, and when a pretty thought occurred to him for his speech, he got off his horse and sat down under the trees to write, so that it might not go out of his head. One morning he had set out at the first streak of day. While he was crossing a wide plain a very pretty conceit came into his head. So he alighted, and leaned up against the willow trees and

poplars on the banks of the little spring that flowed by the side of the meadow. After he had written down his thought, he was looking all round, delighted at being in such a beautiful spot, when he saw on the grass a great golden carp, panting, and at the last gasp. While trying to catch the little flies, it had jumped so far out of the water that it had fallen on the grass, and now it lay there like to die. Avenant was sorry for it; and though it was a fast-day, and he might well have taken it for his dinner, instead of doing so he put it back gently into the stream. As soon as Mother Carp touched the cool water she recovered her spirits. She let herself be carried down to the bottom; and then, coming gaily up to the surface again, she said: "Avenant, I thank you for the kindness you have just shown me. But for you I should have died. You have saved my life, and I shall do as much for you one day." With these few words of good omen she plunged into the water, leaving Avenant in great astonishment at such intelligence and such politeness in a carp.

Another day, when he was going on his way, he saw a crow in great distress. The poor bird was being pursued by a huge eagle. Now, eagles feed greedily on crows, and this one was just on the point of seizing his victim, whom he would have swallowed like a lentil, had not Avenant taken pity on the bird's distress.

"There," said he, "see how the strong oppress the weak. What right has the eagle to eat the crow?" With his bow and arrow, which he always carried with him, he took good aim at the eagle—and then, crack! he shot the arrow into its body and pierced it through and through. It fell dead; and the crow, in great glee, perched itself on a tree, saying: "Avenant, it was most generous of you to come to the aid of a poor crow like me. But I shall not be ungrateful. I'll do as much for you one day."

Avenant, in some surprise at the gratitude of the crow, went on his way. Entering a large wood, while it was yet so early that he could hardly see his way, he heard despairing cries from an owl. "Dear me!" he said, "here is an owl in distress. It must have got caught in some nets." Looking round on every side, at length he saw great nets that the fowlers had spread during the night to catch little birds. "How sad," said he, "that men are only made to torment each other, or to persecute poor animals that do them no harm or injury of any kind!" So saying, he took out his knife and cut the cords. The owl sprang up, but came down again quickly to say: "Avenant, there is no need for many words on my part to make you understand the obligation I am under to you. It speaks for itself. The fowlers would have come and caught me, and without your aid I should have died.

I have a grateful heart, and I shall do as much for you one day."

Such were the three adventures of any importance that happened to Avenant on his journey. He was so eager to reach his destination that he did not loiter on his way to the palace of fair Goldilocks. Everything there was wonderful to look at. There were diamonds lying in heaps as if they had been but stones. The dresses, the silver, the sweetmeats—everything was marvellous; and he thought to himself that if she left it all to come with him, his master, the king, would be very lucky. He put on a doublet of brocade, with pink and white feathers in his hat. He dressed and powdered his hair, and washed his face. Round his neck was tied an embroidered scarf, with a little basket attached, and in it a pretty little dog he had bought while passing through Boulogne. Avenant was so handsome, so beautiful to look on, all his movements were so full of grace, that when he presented himself at the palace gate the guards saluted him humbly, and sent in haste to announce to Princess Goldilocks that Avenant, ambassador from the king, her nearest neighbour, requested to see her.

At the name of Avenant the princess said: "That name has a pleasant sound. I feel sure he is handsome, and that everybody likes him." "You say truly, madam," said all the Maids-of-Honour; "we saw

him from the loft when we were arranging your flax, and all the time he was standing under the windows we couldn't do anything but look at him." "Well, that is a fine occupation," replied fair Goldilocks, "to amuse yourselves by gazing at boys! Now then, I want my best embroidered blue satin gown. My fair hair must be curled. Let me have garlands of fresh flowers, and fetch my high-heeled shoes and my fan. And tell them to sweep out my room and my throne; for it is my desire that he shall tell everywhere that I am in truth fair Goldilocks."

And now all her maids made speed to dress her like a queen. They were in such a hurry that they knocked against each other and made but little progress. At last the princess passed into her gallery, with the great mirrors, to see if nothing were lacking in her appearance. Then she ascended her throne, made of gold and ivory and ebony, the scent of which was like balm, and she told her damsels to take instruments and to sing quite softly so that the sound might jar on no one's ears.

Avenant was led to the audience chamber, where he stood so dazzled with admiration that, as he has often said since then, he could hardly speak. Nevertheless, he plucked up courage and delivered his speech beautifully, begging the princess that he might not have the disappointment of returning without her.

"Gentle Avenant," she said, "all the reasons which you have just given me are excellent, and I assure you I would most willingly do more for you than for another. But you must know that a month ago I was in a boat on the river with all my ladies, when, as they were serving me with luncheon, in taking off my glove, I slipped a ring from my finger, which unluckily fell into the river. It was more precious to me than my kingdom, and I leave you to judge what sorrow its loss caused me. I vowed never to listen to any proposal of marriage till the ambassador who brings it restores my ring. And now think what you have before you, for, were you to speak to me for fifteen days and fifteen nights, you could not persuade me to change my mind."

Avenant was much surprised at this answer. Making her a profound bow, he begged her to accept the little dog, the basket, and the scarf. But she said she wished for no gifts, and charged him to think of what she had just told him.

Returning to his own dwelling, he went supperless to bed, and his little dog, Cabriole, would not eat anything either, and came and lay down beside him. All through the night Avenant never ceased his sighs. "How could I find a ring that fell into a great river a month ago?" he said. "It is nothing but folly to make the attempt. The princess only spoke of it to

me to make it impossible for me to obey her." And he sighed in deep distress. Cabriole, listening all the while, said: "My dear master, I beg you not to be down-hearted about your luck. You are too good not to be happy. Let us go as soon as it is day to the river side." Avenant stretched out his hand to pat him once or twice and returned no other answer. At last, quite overcome with his sorrow, he fell asleep.

When daylight came Cabriole began to cut capers as soon as he awoke. "My master," he said, "get dressed and come out." Avenant had no objection. Getting up, he dressed and went down into the garden, and from the garden he turned his steps unconsciously to the river-side, where he walked along with his hat over his eyes and his arms crossed. All at once he heard a voice calling: "Avenant, Avenant!" Looking all round, and seeing no one, he thought it must have been fancy. He went on walking, and again the voice called: "Avenant, Avenant!" "Who is calling me?" he said. Cabriole, who was very little and who was peering into the water, answered him: "Never again believe what I say if it is not a golden carp I see." Then the big carp appeared and said to him: "You saved my life in the beam-tree meadow, where I should have remained a captive but for you. I promised to do as much for you one day. Well then, dear Avenant, here is fair Goldilock's ring." And

Avenant, stooping down, took it out of Mistress Carp's gullet, thanking her over and over again.

Instead of going home he went straight to the palace with little Cabriole, who was very glad he had brought his master to the river side. The princess was told he wished to see her. "Alas!" she said. "Poor boy! he is coming to bid me farewell. He thinks that what I ask is an impossibility, and he is going home to tell his master so." Avenant, on being announced, presented the ring to her, saying: "Princess, I have fulfilled your command. Will it please you to accept the king, my master, as your husband?" When she saw the ring, the very ring she had lost, she was so astonished, so astonished, that she thought she must be dreaming. "In truth," she said, "dear Avenant, you must be some fairy's favourite, for by yourself it would have been impossible." "Madam," he answered, "I know no fairy, but I had a great wish to obey you." "Then, since you are so willing," she went on, "you must do me another service; otherwise, I shall never marry. Not far from here there is a prince called Galifron, who has taken it into his head that he wants to marry me. He announced his intention to me with fearful threats that, should I refuse, he would lay waste my kingdom. But could I accept him, think you? He is a giant, taller than a high tower, and thinks no more of eating a man than a monkey would

think of eating a chestnut. When he goes to the country he carries little cannons in his pockets, which he uses instead of pistols, and when he speaks very loud those that are near him are struck deaf. I told him I did not wish to marry, and asked to be excused; yet, he has never left off persecuting me, and he kills all my subjects. The first thing to be done, therefore, is for you to fight him and to bring me his head."

Avenant was somewhat stunned by this proposal. He turned it over in his mind for a little while, and then said: "Well, madam, I shall fight against Galifron. I think I shall be beaten, but I shall die like a brave man." The princess was much surprised, and told him all kinds of things to prevent his undertaking the enterprise, but in vain; so he withdrew in order to fetch his armour and all that should be necessary. When he had found all he wanted, he put little Cabriole in his basket, mounted his good horse, and set out for the country of Galifron. He questioned those he met on the way about the prince, and everybody told him he was a real demon, and no one dared go near him. The more he heard this, the more frightened did he become. Cabriole reassured him, saying: "My dear master, while you are fighting, I shall bite his legs. Then he will bend his head to chase me away, and you will kill him." Avenant admired the little dog's spirit, though he knew his help would not avail.

At last he arrived near Galifron's castle. All the roads were covered with the bones and the carcasses of the men he had eaten or torn to pieces. He did not have long to wait for him, for he saw him coming through a wood, his head over-topping the tallest trees, and heard him singing in a terrible voice:—

"Ho, bring me for lunch
Fat babies to crunch;
Not few and not lean,
Or my appetite keen
You will not satisfy,
So hungry am I!"

Avenant immediately began to sing to the same air:—

"Here see Avenant stand
With his spear in his hand,
In humour defiant
Though he isn't a giant,
For there's never a doubt
But he'll tear your teeth out."

The rhymes were not very regular, but then he had made the song in a great hurry, and it is a wonder it was not much worse even, so terribly afraid was he. When Galifron heard these words he looked all round and saw Avenant with his spear in his hand calling him names, one after the other, to make him angry.

This was not necessary, for he flew into a terrible passion, and, taking a heavy bar of iron, would have felled Avenant with one stroke had not the crow perched itself on the top of his head, and, making a dart at his eyes, torn them out with its beak. The blood flowed down his face, and like a madman he struck out on all sides. Avenant parried the blows, and with great force he plunged his spear into the giant again and again up to the hilt, wounding him terribly, and causing him to fall from the blood he lost. Then he hacked off Galifron's head, in great spirits at his good fortune, while the raven, who was perched on a tree, spoke thus: "I have not forgotten the service you did me in killing the eagle that pursued me. I promised to pay my debt, and I think I have done so to-day." "It is I who am the debtor, Sir Raven," replied Avenant, "and I remain your servant." Then, putting the horrible head of Galifron on the horse, he rode away.

When he reached the town everybody ran after him, crying: "Here comes brave Avenant, the slayer of the monster!" so that the princess, who heard the noise quite well, and who trembled lest they should come to tell her of the death of Avenant, did not dare to ask what had happened. But Avenant came in bearing the giant's head, which still struck terror into her, although there was no longer cause for fear.

"Madam," he said, "your enemy is dead. I hope you will no longer refuse the king, my master." "Yes, indeed, I will," said fair Goldilocks. "I still refuse him, unless you are able, before I go away, to fetch me some water from the Dark Grotto. Near here there is a deep cavern fully six leagues in circumference. The entrance is barred by two dragons with fire coming out of their eyes and mouths. Once inside you have to go down into a great hole, full of toads and adders and serpents. At the bottom of this hole is a little cave through which there flows the stream of Beauty and of Health. A miracle happens to whoever washes with this water. If you are beautiful, you will always be so; if you are ugly, you grow fair. If you are young, you never grow any older; if you are old, you grow young. You can understand, Avenant, that I could not leave my kingdom without taking a supply of this water with me."

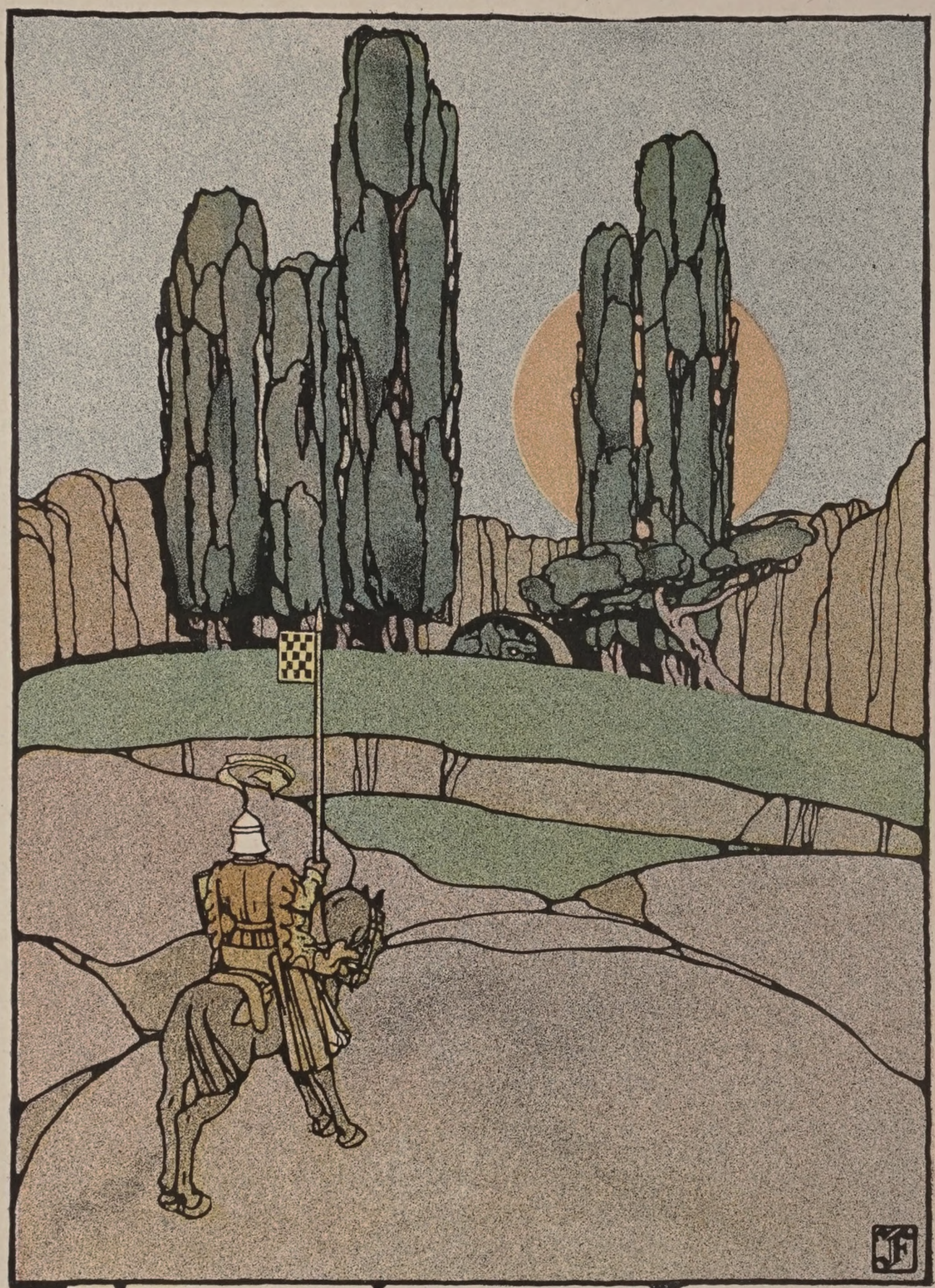
"Madam," he answered, "you are already so beautiful that this water is altogether useless to you. But I am an unlucky ambassador, whose death you seek. I go to search for what you desire, well assured that I shall return no more."

Fair Goldilocks did not change her mind, and Avenant set out with his little dog Cabriole for the Dark Grotto to search for the water of Beauty. All who met him on the way said what a pity it was to see so

fair a youth going recklessly to his death. "He goes to the Grotto by himself, but were he to go a hundred strong he would never succeed. Why does the princess ask such impossible things?" Avenant went on his way, without saying a word, but he was sad at heart.

When he had climbed to the top of a mountain he sat down to rest for a little, letting his horse graze and Cabriole run after the flies. He knew the Dark Grotto was not far off, and he looked to see if it were not in sight. At last he saw, first a hideous rock black as ink, out of which a thick smoke was coming, and after a moment one of the dragons that shot fire from their mouths and eyes. Its body was yellow and green. It had great claws, and a long tail curled into hundreds of twists. When Cabriole saw all this he was so terrified that he did not know where to hide.

Avenant, quite resigned to death, drew his spear, and went down with a phial which the Princess Goldilocks had given him to fill with the water of Beauty. To his little dog Cabriole he said: "My end is near! I can never get that water which is guarded by the dragons. When I am dead fill this bottle with my blood, and take it to the princess that she may see what her errand has cost me. Then repair to the king, my master, and tell him of my unhappy fate." While he was saying these words he heard a voice



Avenant beholds the grotto.

calling him: "Avenant, Avenant!" "Who is calling me?" he asked. He saw an owl in the hollow of an old tree, who said to him: "You extricated me from the fowlers' nets in which I was caught, and you saved my life. I promised to do as much for you one day. Now the time has come. Give me your phial. I know all the paths through the Dark Grotto, and I will fetch the water of Beauty for you." Here was good news for Avenant, as you may believe, and he gave him the bottle in haste. The owl entered the Grotto without hindrance, and in less than a quarter of an hour he came back carrying the bottle well corked. Avenant, delighted, thanked him with all his heart, and, climbing the hill, again took the way to the town with a glad heart.

Going straight to the palace, he presented the phial to fair Goldilocks, who had nothing more to say. She thanked Avenant, gave all the necessary orders for her departure, and then set out on her journey with him. He seemed to her very charming, and she would sometimes say: "If you had been willing I should have made you king, and need never have left my kingdom." But he answered: "I would not do such a wrong to my master for all the kingdoms of the earth, though I think you lovelier than the sun."

At last they reached the capital, where the king, knowing that the Princess Goldilocks was coming,

came to meet her with the fairest gifts in the world. Such great rejoicing was there at their wedding that nothing else was spoken of. But fair Goldilocks, who at the bottom of her heart loved Avenant, was never happy but when she saw him, and his praises were ever on her tongue. "I should never have been here had it not been for Avenant," she said to the king. "He had to perform impossible feats for me, and you owe him a great deal. He gave me the water of Beauty, so I shall never grow old, and I shall be beautiful for ever."

Envious people, listening to the queen's words, said to the king: "You are not jealous, but you have good reason to be. The queen is so much in love with Avenant that she can neither eat nor drink. She does nothing but speak of him and of the obligations you are under to him, as if anyone else whom you might have sent would not have done as much." "I believe you are right," said the king. "Let him be cast into the tower, and irons put on his feet and hands." There Avenant saw no one but the gaoler, who used to throw him a bit of black bread through a hole, and give him some water in an earthen dish, but his little dog Cabriole stayed with him to comfort him, and brought him all the news.

When fair Goldilocks heard of Avenant's disgrace she threw herself at the king's feet, and, weeping bit-

terly, begged him to let Avenant go free. But the more she pleaded the more angry grew the king, thinking that she loved Avenant. He would not relent, so she stopped speaking of the matter, but her heart was very sad.

It occurred to the king that perhaps she did not think him handsome enough, and he had a strong desire to rub his face with the water of Beauty, in order that the queen might love him better than she did at present. This water stood in the bottle on the edge of the mantelshelf in the queen's room. She had put it there so that she might the oftener look at it. But one of the housemaids, when killing a spider with a broom, unfortunately knocked down the bottle, which was broken and all the water spilt. She swept away the traces quickly, and, at her wits' end what to do, she remembered that she had seen in the king's private room a bottle just like it, full of a clear liquid like the water of Beauty. Without saying a word to anybody, she managed to get hold of it, and placed it on the queen's mantelshelf.

Now the water in the king's room was for causing the death of princes and great lords when they had committed crimes. Instead of beheading or hanging them, their faces were rubbed with this water, and they fell asleep and woke no more. One evening, therefore, the king took the bottle and rubbed his face

well with the contents. Then he fell asleep, and he died. The little dog Cabriole was the first to learn what had happened, and did not fail to go and tell Avenant, who asked him to go to Princess Goldilocks and beg her to take thought of the poor prisoner.

Cabriole slipped quietly through the crowd, for there was great confusion at the court owing to the king's death. "Madam," he said to the queen, "do not forget poor Avenant." She bethought herself of the sufferings he had undergone on her account, and of his great faithfulness. Without saying a word to anyone, she went out and made straight for the tower, where, with her own hands, she took off the irons from Avenant's hands and feet. Then, placing a golden crown on his head and the royal robes on his shoulders, she said: "Come, dear Avenant, I make you a king, and take you for my husband." Throwing himself at her feet, he poured out his gratitude. Everyone was delighted to own him for their master. Never was there such a wedding feast, and the Princess Goldilocks and fair Avenant lived long together in peace and happiness.

THE DOLL IN THE GRASS

THERE was once a king who had twelve sons. When they were grown up, he said to them that they must go out into the world to find each one a wife; but the wife must be able to spin and weave and sew a shirt in a day, or he would not have her for a daughter-in-law. He gave each of them a horse and new armour, and then they went out into the world to seek for wives; but before they had gone very far on their way, they said they would not have Askeladden, who was the youngest, with them, for he was not good for anything. So Askeladden must be left, there was nothing else for it. He did not know what to do, or where to turn, and became so sorrowful that he got off his horse, and sat down in the grass to weep.

But after he had sat for a short time one of the tufts of the grass began to move, and out there came a little white thing which, when it came nearer, Askeladden saw to be a charming little maid; but she was very, very tiny.

She came and asked him whether he would come down and see the doll in the grass. To be sure he would; so he went with her. When he went down there sat the doll in the grass on a chair; she was pretty and well-dressed, and she asked Askeladden where he was going, and what errand he was travelling on. He told her that he was one of twelve brothers, and that the king had given each of them a horse and trappings, and had said that they must each one go out into the world and find himself a wife, but that she must be able to spin and weave and sew a shirt in a day, "and if you can do that, and will be my wife, I will seek no further," said Askeladden to the doll in the grass. She would do it willingly, she said, and she began at once to spin and weave and sew the shirt, but it was very; very tiny, not longer than — that.

Askeladden travelled home with the shirt, but as he went on with it, he felt ashamed, because it was so small; but the King said he might have her all the same, so Askeladden travelled back, glad and contented, to fetch his little sweetheart. When he came to the doll in the grass, he wished to take her up on his horse with him; but she would not have that; she said she would sit and drive in a silver spoon, and she had two little white horses which would draw her.

So off they set, he on his horse, and she in her silver spoon, and the horses that drew her were two little

white mice; but Askeladden always kept to one side of the road, for he was afraid he might ride over her, as she was so very tiny. When they had gone some distance on the way, they came to a large lake, where Askeladden's horse becoming restive, shied over to the other side of the road and upset the spoon, so that the doll in the grass was thrown into the water. At this Askeladden was greatly alarmed, for he did not know how he should get her up again; but by-and-by a merman came up with her, and now she had become just as big as an ordinary person, and much more beautiful than she was before. So he put her before him on his horse, and rode home.

When Askeladden arrived, all his brothers were at home also, and each with a sweetheart, but they were so ugly-looking, and so ill-tempered, that they had already been quarrelling on the way. They had hats on their heads that were coloured with tar and soot, and it had run off their hats on to their faces, and had added to the ugliness and foulness of their looks.

When the brothers saw Askeladden's sweetheart they were all jealous; but the king was so proud of them both that he sent all the others away; and then Askeladden was married to the doll in the grass, and they lived afterwards in joy and happiness for a very long time; and if they are not dead, they live so still.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

THERE was once a miller who was very poor, but he had a beautiful daughter. Now, it happened that he met the king, and to show that he was somebody, he told him that he had a daughter who could spin straw into gold.

"Then," said the king, "that is a quality which pleases me well. If your daughter is, as you say, so very skilful, bring her to the castle to-morrow, and I will try what she can do."

When she arrived, the king led her into a chamber which was quite full of straw, and, placing a spinning-wheel before her, said: "Now set to work, for if all this straw is not spun into gold before sunrise, you shall die." Then he locked the door himself, and left her alone.

The poor maiden sat in despair. She had not the least idea how to turn straw into gold. Every moment her fear became greater, and at last she began to weep bitterly.

All of a sudden the door opened, and a little man entered who said: "Good-evening, young woman. Why do you weep so sadly?"

"Oh!" she replied, "I have all this straw to spin into gold, and I know not how to do it."

"What will you give me," said the little man, "if I spin it for you?"

"My necklace," she said.

The man took the necklace, seated himself before the spinning-wheel, and as the wheel went whirr, whirr, whirr, three times, the spool was full of gold. Then he fastened on more straw, and after three turns of the wheel the spool was a second time full; and so he went on all night, and before the morning dawned the straw was all spun and the spools full of gold.

At sunrise the king came to the chamber, but when he caught sight of the glittering gold he was astonished and full of joy. But his heart was greedy for gold, so he led the miller's daughter into another chamber full of straw, and much larger than the former, and ordered her, as she valued her life, to spin that into gold.

The maiden, when left alone, could only weep. But the little man again appeared, and said: "What will you give me if I spin all this straw into gold?"

"My ring from my finger," answered the maiden.

The little man took the ring, set to work at the

spinning-wheel, and before morning the whole of the straw was spun into gold.

The king was delighted at the glittering heap, but he was not yet satisfied with gold. So he led the maiden into a still larger room full of straw, and said: "You must spin for me during one more night, and if all this straw is spun into gold by the morning, then you shall be my wife."

"Although she is a miller's daughter," thought the king, "I could not find a richer wife in the world."

No sooner was the maiden alone, than the mannikin again appeared for the third time, and said: "What will you give me if I spin the straw for you this time?"

"I have nothing more that I can give," answered the maiden.

"Then promise when you are queen to give me your first child," said the little man.

"Who knows if I shall ever be queen," thought the maiden; and she knew also that there was no other help for her. So she promised what he wished, and the mannikin soon spun all the straw into gold.

In the morning, when the king came and found that what he required was done, he ordered preparations to be made for a splendid wedding, and in a few days the miller's beautiful daughter became a queen.

About a year after this a beautiful little child was

He began to weep bitterly

born to the queen, who never thought of her promise to the little man, till one night he stepped suddenly into her chamber, and said: "Now give me what you have promised."

In great terror, the queen offered him all the treasures in the kingdom if he would leave her the child.

But the little man said, "No; something living I like better than all the treasures in the world." Then the queen began to mourn and weep so bitterly that the little man had compassion on her, and said: "I will give you three days, and if in that time you can find out my name, then you shall keep your child."

After he was gone, the queen lay awake till morning, thinking over all the names she had ever heard of, and determined to send a messenger all over the country to inquire far and wide what names had been given to people formerly.

The next night the little man came again, and she repeated all the names she could think of, Casper, Melchior, Balzar, and many others. But the little man said at each; "No, I am not so called."

The next day she made every inquiry among the neighbours, and when the little man came at night for the second time, she mentioned most unearthly names, such as Brown-ribs, Dicky-calf, and Spindle-leg. But he answered always, "No, that is not my name."

On the third day the messenger returned and related

his adventures. He had not been able to find a single new name, but on his way home he crossed a high mountain, and came to the borders of a wood, in which the foxes and the hares wished themselves "good-night." After this he came to a tiny little house, and saw before it a fire burning, and hopping round it, on one leg, was a ridiculous-looking little man, who cried:

"To-day I brew, to-morrow I bake,
Next morning I shall the Queen's child take;
How glad I am that she does not dream
That Rumpelstiltskin is my name!"

You can imagine how joyful the queen was when she heard this name; and as soon as the little man appeared and asked, "Now then, queen, what is my name?"—"Well," she replied, "are you called Conrad?"

"No."

"Henry?"

"No."

"Then your name is Rumpelstiltskin."

"The fairies must have told you that! the fairies must have told you that!" screamed the little man, and in his rage he struck the ground so fiercely with his right foot that it sunk deeply into the earth, dragging his body after it. Then, in his fury, he laid hold of his left foot with both hands, and tore himself in halves.

LITTLE IDA'S FLOWERS

"MY poor flowers are quite dead," said little Ida; "they were so pretty yesterday evening, and now all the leaves are hanging down quite withered. Why do they do that?" she asked of the student, who sat on the sofa. She liked him very much. He could tell the most amusing stories and cut out the prettiest pictures,—hearts and ladies dancing and castles with doors that opened, as well as flowers; he was a delightful student.

"Why do the flowers look so faded to-day?" she asked again, and pointed to her nosegay, which was quite withered.

"Don't you know what is the matter with them?" said the student. "The flowers were at a ball last night, and, therefore it is no wonder they hang their heads."

"But flowers cannot dance?" cried little Ida.

"Yes, indeed, they can," replied the student. "When it grows dark, and everybody is asleep, they

jump about quite merrily. They have a ball almost every night."

"Can children go to these balls?"

"Yes," said the student, "little daisies and lilies-of-the-valley."

"Where do the beautiful flowers dance?" asked little Ida.

"Have you not often seen the large castle outside the gates of the town, where the King lives in summer, and where the beautiful garden is full of flowers? And have you not fed the swans with bread when they swam towards you? Well, the flowers have capital balls there, believe me."

"I was in the garden out there yesterday with my mother," said Ida, "but all the leaves were off the trees, and there was not a single flower left. Where are they? I used to see so many in the summer."

"They are in the castle," replied the student. "You must know that as soon as the King and all the court are gone into the town, the flowers run out of the garden into the castle, and you should see how merry they are. The two most beautiful roses seat themselves on the throne, and are called the King and Queen; then all the red cockscombs range themselves on each side and bow; these are the lords-in-waiting. After that the pretty flowers come in, and there is a grand ball. The blue violets represent little naval

cadets, and dance with hyacinths and crocuses, which they call young ladies. The tulips and tiger-lilies are the old ladies who sit and watch the dancing, so that everything may be conducted with order and propriety."

"But," said little Ida, "is there no one there to hurt the flowers for dancing in the King's castle.

"No one knows anything about it," said the student. "The old steward of the castle, who has to watch there at night, sometimes comes in; but he carries a great bunch of keys, and as soon as the flowers hear the keys rattle they run and hide themselves behind the long curtains, and stand quite still, just peeping their heads out. Then the old steward says, 'I smell flowers here,' but he cannot see them."

"Oh, how capital!" said little Ida, clapping her hands. "Should I be able to see these flowers?"

"Yes," said the student, "mind you think of it next time you go out. No doubt you will see them if you peep through the window. I did so to-day, and I saw a long yellow lily lying stretched out on the sofa; she was a court lady."

"Can the flowers from the Botanical Gardens go to these balls?" asked Ida. "It is such a distance!"

"Oh, yes," said the student, "whenever they like, for they can fly. Have you not seen those beautiful

red, white, and yellow butterflies, that look like flowers? They were flowers once. They have flown off their stalks into the air, and flap their leaves as if they were little wings to make them fly. Then, if they behave well, they obtain permission to fly about during the day, instead of being obliged to sit still on their stems at home, and so in time their leaves become real wings. It may be, however, that the flowers in the Botanical Gardens have never been to the King's palace, and, therefore, they know nothing of the merry doings at night which take place there. I will tell you what to do, and the botanical professor, who lives close by here, will be so surprised. You know him very well, do you not? Well, next time you go into his garden you must tell one of the flowers that there is going to be a grand ball at the castle; then that flower will tell all the others, and they will fly away to the castle as soon as possible. And when the professor walks into his garden there will not be a single flower left. How he will wonder what has become of them!"

"But how can one flower tell another? Flowers cannot speak."

"No, certainly not," replied the student; "but they can make signs. Have you not often seen that when the wind blows they nod at one another, and rustle all their green leaves?"

"Can the professor understand the signs?" asked Ida.

"Yes, to be sure he can. He went one morning into his garden, and saw a stinging-nettle making signs with its leaves to a beautiful red carnation. It was saying, 'You are so pretty, I like you very much.' But the professor did not approve of such nonsense, so he clapped his hands on the nettle to stop it. Then the leaves, which are its fingers, stung him so sharply that he has never ventured to touch a nettle since."

"Oh, how funny!" said Ida, and she laughed.

"How can any one put such notions into a child's head?" said a tiresome lawyer, who had come to pay a visit, and sat on the sofa. He did not like the student, and would grumble when he saw him cutting out droll or amusing pictures. Sometimes it would be a man hanging on a gibbet and holding a heart in his hand as if he had been stealing hearts. Sometimes it was an old witch riding through the air on a broom and carrying her husband on her nose. But the lawyer did not like such jokes, and he would say as he had just said, "How can any one put such nonsense into a child's head? what absurd fancies there are!"

But to little Ida all these stories which the student told her about the flowers seemed very droll, and she thought over them a great deal. The flowers did hang their heads, because they had been dancing all

night, and were very tired, and most likely they were ill. Then she took them into the room where a number of toys lay on a pretty little table, and the whole of the table drawer besides was full of beautiful things. Her doll Sophy lay in the doll's bed asleep, and little Ida said to her, "You must really get up, Sophy, and be content to lie in the drawer to-night; the poor flowers are ill, and they must lie in your bed, then perhaps they will get well again." So she took the doll out, who looked quite cross, and said not a single word, for she was angry at being turned out of her bed. Ida placed the flowers in the doll's bed, and drew the quilt over them. Then she told them to lie quite still and be good, while she made some tea for them, so that they might be quite well and able to get up the next morning. And she drew the curtains close round the little bed, so that the sun might not shine in their eyes. During the whole evening she could not help thinking of what the student had told her. And before she went to bed herself she was obliged to peep behind the curtains into the garden where all her mother's beautiful flowers grew, hyacinths and tulips, and many others. Then she whispered to them quite softly, "I know you are going to a ball to-night." But the flowers appeared as if they did not understand, and not a leaf moved; still Ida felt quite sure she knew all about it.

She lay awake a long time after she was in bed, thinking how pretty it must be to see all the beautiful flowers dancing in the King's garden. "I wonder if my flowers have really been there," she said to herself, and then she fell asleep. In the night she awoke; she had been dreaming of the flowers and of the student, as well as the tiresome lawyer who found fault with him. It was quite still in Ida's bedroom; the night lamp burned on the table and her father and mother were asleep.

"I wonder if my flowers are still lying in Sophy's bed?" she thought to herself; "how much I should like to know!" She raised herself a little, and glanced at the door of the room where all her flowers and playthings lay; it was partly open, and as she listened it seemed as if some one in the room was playing the piano, but softly and more prettily than she had ever before heard it. "Now all the flowers are certainly dancing in there," she thought; "oh, how much I should like to see them!" but she did not dare to move for fear of disturbing her father and mother. "If they would only come in here," she thought; but they did not come, and the music continued to play so beautifully, and was so pretty, that she could resist no longer.

She crept out of her little bed, went softly to the door, and looked into the room. Oh, what a splendid

sight there was to be sure! There was no night-lamp burning, but the room appeared quite light, for the moon shone through the window upon the floor, and made it almost like day. All the hyacinths and tulips stood in two long rows down the room, not a single flower remained in the window, and the flower-pots were all empty. The flowers were dancing gracefully on the floor, making turns and holding each other by their long green leaves as they swung round. At the piano sat a large yellow lily which little Ida was sure she had seen in the summer, for she remembered the student saying she was very much like Miss Lina, one of Ida's friends. They all laughed at him then, but now it seemed to little Ida as if the tall, yellow flower was really like the young lady. She had just the same manners while playing, bending her long yellow face from side to side, and nodding in time to the beautiful music. Then she saw a large purple crocus jump into the middle of the table where the playthings stood, go up to the doll's bedstead and draw back the curtains; there lay the sick flowers, but they got up directly, and nodded to the others as a sign that they wished to dance with them. The old rough doll, with the broken mouth, stood up and bowed to the pretty flowers. They did not look ill at all now, but jumped about and were very merry, yet none of them noticed little Ida. Presently it

seemed as if something fell from the table. Ida looked that way, and saw a slight carnival rod jumping down among the flowers as if it belonged to them; it was, however, very smooth and neat, and a little wax doll with a broad-brimmed hat on her head, like the one worn by the lawyer, sat upon it. The carnival rod hopped about among the flowers on its three red stilted feet, and stamped quite loud when it stamped the Mazurka; the flowers could not perform this dance; they were too light to stamp in that manner.

All at once the wax doll which rode on the carnival rod seemed to grow larger and taller, and it turned round and said to the paper flowers, "How can you put such things in a child's head? they are all foolish fancies;" and then the doll was exactly like the lawyer with the broad-brimmed hat, and looked as yellow and as cross as he did; but the paper dolls struck him on his thin legs, and he shrunk up again and became quite a little wax doll. This was very amusing, and Ida could not help laughing. The carnival rod went on dancing, and the lawyer was obliged to dance also. It was no use for him to make himself great and tall, or to remain a little wax doll with a large black hat; still he must dance. Then at last the other flowers interceded for him, especially those who had lain in the doll's bed, and the carnival rod gave up his danc-

ing. At the same moment a loud knocking was heard in the drawer, where Ida's doll Sophy lay with many other toys. Then the rough doll ran to the end of the table, laid himself flat down upon it, and began to pull the drawer out a little way.

Sophy raised herself, and looked round quite astonished. "There must be a ball here to-night," she said. "Why did not somebody tell me?"

"Will you dance with me?" said the rough doll.

"You are the right sort to dance with certainly," said she, turning her back upon him.

Then she seated herself on the edge of the drawer, and thought that perhaps one of the flowers would ask her to dance; but none of them did. Then she coughed, "Hem, hem, hem;" but for all that no partner came. The shabby doll now danced quite alone, and not very badly, after all. As none of the flowers seemed to notice Sophy, she let herself down from the drawer to the floor, so as to make a very great noise. All the flowers came round her directly, and asked if she had hurt herself, especially those who had lain in her bed. But she was not hurt at all, and Ida's flowers thanked her for the use of the nice bed, and were very kind to her. They led her into the middle of the room, where the moon shone, and danced with her, while all the other flowers formed a circle round them. Then Sophy was very happy, and said they

might keep her bed; she did not mind lying in the drawer at all. But the flowers thanked her very much, and said:

"We cannot live long. To-morrow morning we shall be quite dead; and you must tell little Ida to bury us in the garden, near the grave of the canary; then in the summer we shall wake up again, and be more beautiful than ever."

"No, you must not die," said Sophy, as she kissed the flowers.

Then the door of the room opened, and a number of beautiful flowers danced in. Ida could not imagine where they could have come from, unless they were the flowers from the King's garden. First came two lovely roses, with little golden crowns on their heads; these were the King and Queen. Beautiful stocks and carnations followed, bowing to every one present. They had also music with them. Large poppies and peonies had pea-shells for instruments, and blew into them till they were quite red in the face.

The bunches of blue hyacinths and the little white snowdrops jingled their bell-like flowers, as if they were real bells. Then came many more flowers; blue violets, purple heart's-ease, daisies, and lilies-of-the-valley, and they all danced together, and kissed each other. It was very beautiful to behold.

At last the flowers wished each other good-night.

Then little Ida crept back into bed again and dreamt of all she had seen. When she arose the next morning, she went quickly to the little table to see if the flowers were still there. She drew aside the curtains of the little bed. There they all lay, but quite faded; much more so than the day before. Sophy was lying in the drawer where Ida had placed her; but she looked very sleepy.

"Do you remember what the flowers told you to say to me?" asked little Ida. But Sophy looked quite stupid, and said not a single word.

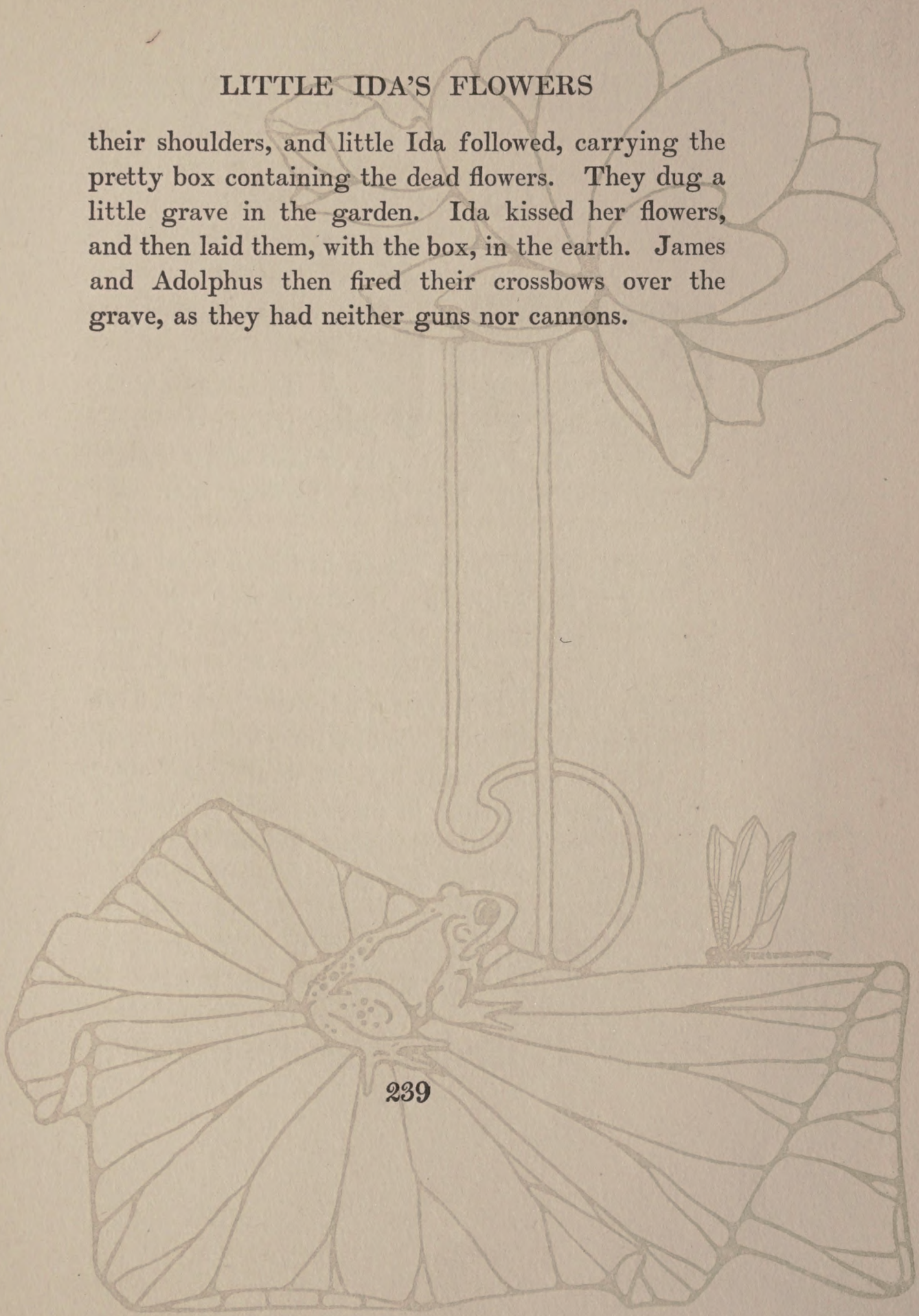
"You are not kind at all," said Ida; "and yet they all danced with you."

Then she took a little paper box, on which were painted beautiful birds, and laid the dead flowers in it.

"This shall be your pretty coffin," she said; "and by-and-by, when my cousins come to visit me, they shall help me to bury you out in the garden; so that next summer you may grow up again more beautiful than ever."

Her cousins were two good-tempered boys, whose names were James and Adolphus. Their father had given them each a bow and arrow, and they had brought them to show Ida. She told them about the poor flowers which were dead, and as soon as they obtained permission they went with her to bury them. The two boys walked first, with their crossbows on

their shoulders, and little Ida followed, carrying the pretty box containing the dead flowers. They dug a little grave in the garden. Ida kissed her flowers, and then laid them, with the box, in the earth. James and Adolphus then fired their crossbows over the grave, as they had neither guns nor cannons.



THE PEONIES

MANY, many years ago, there lived in China an old man named Tsieou-Sien. He owned several acres of land and a thatched house. His wife had died, leaving him childless.

From his early youth Tsieou had been passionately devoted to the cultivation of flowers and fruits. If, after great trouble, he succeeded in obtaining a rare flower, his joy was greater than if he had found a precious stone. If he met a merchant who had valuable plants to sell, he would buy them instantly, and if he had no money with him he would take off his clothes and leave them in pawn. Sometimes dishonest men, taking advantage of Tsieou-Sien's folly, would surround a cut flower with earth so that its lack of roots would not be noticed, and bring it to Tsieou-Sien; but, extraordinary to relate, as soon as he planted the stalks in the ground, these flowers would grow.

After a long time Tsieou-Sien had made a large gar-

den enclosed with bamboo trellises. Upon this artificial hedge the eglantine, the honeysuckle, the yellow amaranth, the hibiscus and mallow twined their branches and mingled their blossoms, and at its base grew balsams, prince's feather, poppies, the golden gladiolus, pink and white lilies, the campion, peonies, and a host of others too numerous to mention. It looked like a screen enriched with a thousand colours. Rare plants were to be seen everywhere; one had hardly faded before another would open. Facing the east there was a folding wooden door; passing through it, you found a double hedge of bamboo, on either side of which stood a row of cypress-trees planted very close together to make shade. This avenue led to three arbours covered with thatches. These were spacious, airy and well lighted by windows. The beds, the tables and other furniture were remarkably clean; the floor was so well swept that not an atom of dust remained.

Now, as we have already said, flowers blazed in the garden during the entire year; the four seasons were an eternal spring. You saw here the plum-tree, which raises its shining trunk; the vanilla, whose perfume betrays it in the dark; the tea, which inspires beautiful rhymes; the almond-tree, whose beauty is doubled by the spring rains; the feverfew, which braves the rigours of the frosts; the water lily, with its body of

jade; the peony, whose perfume comes from the skies; the silvery lotus floating on the pool, the fiery, pompous pomegranate, which has no rival; the cinnamon, whose odour is stolen from the moon; the pear-tree, with its flower as pure and white as the moon at midnight; the peach-tree, with its red petals flushing as if it reflected the sun; the calycanthus, which drops perfume from its bell; the beautiful laurel, the azalea like a scarf of misty clouds, and the little plum Yo Ly, called the balloon of embroidered silk. But one cannot describe all the plants and trees mingling their magnificent colours and unfolding their host of beauties and perfumes.

Tsieou-Sien rose early every day, watered his flowers and removed the fallen leaves; he drew the water to sprinkle them, and towards evening refreshed them a second time. If he saw one nearly ready to blossom, he was beside himself with joy, and sang and danced; sometimes he warmed a cup of wine, sometimes he boiled a cup of tea, and, bowing towards his flowers with deep reverence, he poured out libations before them, repeating three times: "Flowers, be happy! May you live ten centuries!" Then, sitting at their feet, he emptied his glass drop by drop. When the wine had entered his brain, he sang or whistled, according to his fancy, and then, when fatigue overcame him, taking a stone for a pillow, he would go to sleep

at the roots of his plants. From the moment the bud was first seen to that when it was fully open, he would remain at the flower-bed.

If the burning rays of the sun dried a flower, with the aid of his little broom of straw he would sprinkle it with fresh water; when the moon shone, he would spend the entire night in the garden; if there came up a hurtful wind, or a violent rain fall, Tsieou-Sien, donning his coat of bark and raising his parasol, would wander through the garden to examine everything in detail, and if there was an injured branch he would support it with a reed. Even in the middle of the night he would get up several times to make his tour of inspection.

To climb the trees and break the blossoming boughs destined to bear fruit, he greatly deplored. He would say: "During the whole year the flowers blossom only once; during the four seasons they only take one for themselves; and during this season they only appropriate a few days. After having suffered the hardships of the three seasons and obtained the grateful temperature that has been granted them, you see them dance in the breeze and regard you smilingly, just as men satisfied that their end has been accomplished. But if they are annoyed or maltreated by men, how quickly is destroyed in a single morning the short life that has been obtained with such infinite trouble. Oh,

if the flowers could speak, how many sighs of sadness would they breathe!

"And, moreover, during this brief moment of rapture, even if the buds are spared, how many calamities must the flowers suffer while they are at the height of their beauty! Insects prick them, bees gather their honey, birds peck them, worms nip them, the sun burns them, the wind scatters them, the mists wear them out, and the rains beat them. It is man who must defend them; he must take pity on them.

"If, on the contrary by a blamable caprice, he cuts or mutilates them, how can they support this treatment?"

All his life long Tsieou-Sien had kept to his rule of never gathering a flower and never touching a bud. When, for example, he visited the garden of a stranger, it was with love that he examined every flower, and he would willingly remain there a whole day lost in contemplation. If the master, pleading the wealth of his garden, wished to gather a flower for him, Tsieou cried out: "Murder!" and would not consent to such a thing. It sometimes happened that his neighbours came to his garden to gather a nosegay. If Tsieou did not see them, they succeeded; but if he saw them, he begged them to desist. If they took no notice of his request, Tsieou respectfully bowed his head, and, with extreme politeness, interceded from

the depths of his heart for his poor flowers. Thus, although they called him the "Flower Fool," every one was touched by his sincerely kind heart; and as soon as they abstained from disturbing the objects of his affection, he overwhelmed them with thanks and salutations.

His servants often tried to make a few pennies out of the garden, but Tsieou often gave them money, and if they profited by his absence to take something, the master never failed to notice the damaged stalk on his return, and, full of compassion, he would apply a little mud to the wound. This he called "doctoring the flowers."

For these reasons, Tsieou never willingly granted any one permission to enter his garden; even his friends and relatives obtained a favourable reply with difficulty; and Tsieou would not let them in until they had promised to regard the flowers at a distance. If any one stole a flower, he was not slow in finding it out; his brow flushed, his face turned purple, he heaved great sighs of impatience, and muttered imprecations. To this imprudent one the garden was for ever closed. Knowing Tsieou's peculiarities, therefore, every one refrained from touching a single leaf.

As a rule, bushy plants and leafy trees are the retreats of animals and birds; therefore in this luxu-

riant garden a great number of both were to be seen. If they ate the fruits alone, that was all right; but if they picked at the flowers Tsieou brought them millet and grain and addressed entreaties to them, which they understood.

The orchard contained a great variety of fruits, remarkable in size, beauty and flavour. When they were ripe, Tsieou made an offering to the Prince of Flowers, not daring to touch the productions of his garden till after this oblation; then he sent the first fruits of his harvest to his neighbours, and used the surplus for his source of income. Despite his fifty years, Tsieou was in good health, robust and alert; he never knew fatigue. Dressed in very simple clothes and accustomed to a frugal diet, he lived in ease and contentment; and, possessing abundant means, he relieved the poor of the village. Therefore, there was no one in the village who did not respect him. People called him Mr. Tsieou; but he called himself "The Old Man who Waters his Garden."

In a neighbouring village there lived a crafty and cruel young man named Tchang-Oey. He belonged to a family of mandarins, and made use of his proud position to oppress his neighbours. A troop of valets and slaves—more like wolves and tigers—formed a body to execute his wicked designs. One day after breakfast, when they were half tipsy, they took a

walk, and it was not long before they arrived before Tsieou's garden. The outside hedge of gay flowers and the thick shade of the trees rejoiced their eyes, and with one voice they asked to whom belonged this fresh and beautiful garden. The servant replied that the grounds belonged to Mr. Tsieou, the one who is called the "Flower Fool." "Oh, I have heard that there was a Mr. Tsieou who possesses a collection of rare and beautiful flowers; then that is his dwelling before us?"

"That is it," replied the servant; "but my master is a little peculiar; he rarely permits any one to see his garden."

"For everybody that is likely," said Tchang-Oey, "but for me this denial is not intended," and he instantly pushed open the gate.

The peonies were now in blossom. Tsieou had just finished watering them, and he was seated near the flower-bed with a flagon of wine and two dishes of fruits. When he heard the gate open he left his wine, and, running towards the gate, saw five or six persons standing before him.

"What do these gentlemen wish?" he asked.

"Do you not know who I am, old man?" said Tchang. "I am Tchang-Oey. The country-seat called Tchang-kai, in this neighbourhood, belongs to my family. I have heard that you own a multitude

of beautiful flowers, and I have come here expressly to admire them."

"I will inform your Highness," replied Tsieou, "that I have nothing curious at present. There are peaches and apricots, but nothing more; everything has faded; there is nothing more to see."

Tchang-Oey looked straight through Tsieou-Sien and cried: "What is the matter, old man? Is it a sin to look at flowers? You tell me there are no more. Do you think I want to eat them?"

"Truly no," replied Tsieou, "the old Chinese is not deceiving your Lordship; truly all the flowers have ceased blooming."

Tchang-Oey was not a man to listen to this. He stepped forward, pushed the old man aside roughly, and they all entered tumultuously.

Now of all the plants in the garden the peonies only were in bloom. There were five remarkable varieties of this flower—the queen of the flower-beds. These were: the golden ladder, the green butterfly, the watermelon, the dazzling blue lion, and the head of the great red lion. The peonies were ranged around the thatched cottage and stone balustrade that bordered the pond. The highest stalks were ten feet high and the lowest six or seven. The largest of the flowers resembled a red copper basin. The dazzling brilliancy of their colours delighted the eye.

The young men exclaimed at the beauty of these plants, and, in order to enjoy their perfume, Tchang-Oey threw his leg over the balustrade. Vexed and surprised, Tsieou cried out:

"Sir, remain here, look at them from a distance." But Tchang-Oey, already irritated because of his difficulties in entering, had been seeking a reason for quarrelling with Tsieou, and he now assumed the air of having been insulted.

"How is this?" he said. "You are my nearest neighbour, and you do not know what kind of a man Tchang-Oey is. When you have such beautiful flowers, you tell me that they are all over. When I shall have broken your flowers, then it will be time for you to be angry." And thereupon he drew some of the flowers towards him and jumped over the barrier in order to enjoy the fragrance close.

Tsieou-Sien was terribly angry, but he dared not open his lips, saying to himself: "He will enjoy them a little and then he will go." But alas! how could he divine the intentions of that wicked man!

Tchang-Oey said: "We should drink while enjoying the fragrance and beauty of this garden," and ordered his servants to bring wine.

Now Tsieou, feeling nervous, stepped forward. "Sir," he entreated, "the place where the snail creeps is truly horrible; it is no proper place to receive you.

After having enjoyed these flowers, your Lordship had better return to your noble dwelling to drink your wine."

Pointing to the ground, Tchang-Oey replied: "Here is an excellent place to sit down."

"But," answered the old man, "the earth is uneven and hard; how can your Lordship dream of selecting such a seat?"

"That is no matter," said the young man, "we will spread a carpet here to take care of our clothes."

By this time the wine and everything needed for the repast had arrived, and the whole band was soon seated in a circle crying and yelling at the height of joy, while the poor gardener, seated alone, cursed them in silence.

The sight of so much beauty created the wicked desire in Tchang-Oey's heart of appropriating the garden. "You must sell your garden to me," he said roughly to Tsieou-Sien.

Alarmed, the latter replied: "This garden is the life of the old Chinese. How could I ever sell it?"

"Whether it is your life or not," answered Tchang-Oey, "you must sell it to me. You need not leave it; you will tend it for me. Doesn't this plan please you?"

"Ah!" cried the companions of the young lord, "you are in luck, old man, and, having obtained so

great a favour from his Lordship, you might at least offer your thanks."

Tsieou felt humiliated for a moment; then he was so paralysed with anger that he could not move.

Tchang-Oey exclaimed: "What a stupid old man! Why don't you reply?"

"I have told you," the gardener answered, "that I will not sell it. Why do you ask me again?"

"Nonsense!" said the young man; "if you will not sell it, then I will seize it."

Tsieou-Sien knew that he had to deal with a powerful man; so, swallowing his anger, he said: "If your Lordship is determined to buy it, very well! Be it so. But I ask that you give me a day."

"Very well," cried the whole troop. "Marvellous! To-morrow, then!"

They all rose and the servants gathered up the things on which the repast had been served. Tchang-Oey approached the peonies with the intention of gathering them, but Tsieou-Sien stopped him. "Sir," he said, "these plants are not worth much, it is true; but you little know how much labour has been bestowed on them. To-day they have adorned themselves with blooms; you will not destroy them. How terrible to commit such a crime!"

But Tchang-Oey replied insolently: "What is it you call a crime? To-morrow they will belong to me.

What have you got to do with it?" and he stretched out his hand.

The old gardener seized him by the coat, for he would have given his life for his flowers. "Sir," he cried, "beat the old Chinese, kill him if you will; he will not allow you to pull his flowers."

"What a detestable old man!" cried Tchang-Oey's friends in chorus. "His Lordship picks the flowers—is that a grave crime? Because you put on airs, do you think that you can frighten or hinder him?"

Tsieou was nearly beside himself, and implored the aid of Heaven, but he could not stop the pillage. In one minute many flowers had been pulled.

Filled with grief, Tsieou began to revile the disorderly band: "Robbers! Scoundrels!" he cried; "you leap over my threshold; you injure me; you vilify me! This garden is my very life; why do you do this?" Then rushing at Tchang-Oey, he pushed him, and, the young man having drunk too much, was unsteady and rolled on the ground head foremost. The fall only increased his anger, and, having got on his feet again, he ran about breaking off the blossoms in rage until the ground was completely strewn. But this was not enough: he jumped into the midst of the peonies and trampled them under foot.

What a pity! And such lovely flowers!

The garden was ruined. Hearing the cries and

groans, the neighbours rushed in, and, seeing the ruffians at work, begged them to cease their destruction, and asked what it all meant. As Tchang-Oey went to the gate he cried: "You have heard this old man say that he has given his garden to me."

"Drunken words!" exclaimed the people of the village; "drunken words that mean nothing," and they returned to Tsieou and tried to console him.

Left alone, Tsieou ran towards his flowers, crying: "Oh, flowers, that all my life I have loved so well and protected! I, who would not touch one of your leaves, would that I could have prevented the evil that fell upon you!"

As he was thus lamenting, he heard a tender human voice behind him saying: "Tsieou-Sien, what has happened to distress you so greatly?"

Turning around, Tsieou saw a young girl of about sixteen, graceful and beautiful, and clothed with taste and simplicity.

"Who are you, young lady?" he asked, "and what has brought you here?"

"I am," replied the young girl, "your nearest neighbour. I have heard that you have some magnificent peonies in full bloom, and I have come to admire them."

At the word peonies, Tsieou-Sien began to sob afresh.

"What dreadful thing has happened to you?" asked the young girl again.

Thereupon the gardener told her all.

"Is that the cause of your grief?" she said, smilingly. "Would you like to see the flowers reappear on their stalks?"

"Young lady," replied Tsieou-Sien, "do not play with me. When a flower has once dropped from its branch, is there any means to restore it?"

"My ancestors," said the unknown, "have bequeathed to me the arts of magic, by which I can perform this wonder. I have succeeded every time that I have attempted it."

The old man fell to the ground to express his gratitude. "Young lady," he said, "deign to employ this magic art; it is beyond his power for the old Chinese to express his gratitude."

"Instead of thanking me," replied the visitor, "go and draw some water."

Tsieou hastened to obey, but as he was filling his jug he turned his head, and lo! the young girl had vanished and all the flowers were blooming on their stalks, not a single one remained on the ground. Before each one had had a distinct colour; now each one was mottled, and they were far more beautiful and dazzling than before.

Surprised, joyful, and frightened, Tsieou exclaimed:

"I did not believe the young lady was so clever a magician! I must go and thank her!" He went all around the garden, but the stranger was nowhere to be found. "I will go to the gate," then said Tsieou to himself, "and wait for her to come out."

But when he came to the gate he found it shut. On opening it, he saw his two neighbours, Hou-Kong and Tan-Loo, standing near it watching some fishermen drying their nets.

As soon as they saw the gardener the two men, bowing low, said to him: "We have heard of the injustice you have suffered from Tchang-Oey, but we have not been informed of the details."

"Oh, say no more about it," replied Tsieou-Sien. "I suffered bad treatment from a troop of insolent drunkards; but a young lady came to me, who, by the aid of secret magic, has restored everything. Before I could give her a word of thanks she disappeared. Which way did she go?"

These singular words astonished the two neighbours. "Does any means exist to perform such a wonder?" they cried. "And when, did you say, the young girl went away?"

"Just now," answered Tsieou.

"We were in a position to see any one go out. Nobody passed by here."

This reply threw consternation into the mind of the

gardener. "Is it possible," he thought, "that this was an immortal spirit from the sky?"

"How did she replace your flowers upon their stalks?" asked the two friends, and asked to behold this wonder with their own eyes.

Their astonishment was increased. Surely the young girl was a spirit. What mortal could perform such a miracle!

Tsieou burnt choice perfumes to thank the sky, and prostrated himself humbly. "The ardent affection which you have always bestowed upon your flowers," said his friends to him, "has caused the immortals to descend to you. If to-morrow Tchang-Oey and his wicked companions should be informed of what has happened, and should come here, they would die of shame."

"No, no," responded Tsieou-Sien; "these men are vicious dogs; they will run away. Why should they come back?" And the two neighbours thought he was right.

In his joy Tsieou-Sien warmed some wine and kept his friends with him, who, after enjoying the beautiful flowers until the evening, returned to the village, talking over the events of the day.

Soon everybody heard of the matter, and on the following day many people wanted to see the garden, but feared they would not be allowed to enter. They

were mistaken. Tsieou was a man of deep wisdom. Having been favoured by the Immortals, his thought had taken flight above the things of the earth. Seated by the side of his peonies all night, he lived over the adventure. Suddenly his mind was illuminated. Said he:

"I kept all these flowers for myself; doubtless that is why evil befell them. But, if they are under the protection of the Immortals, there is no reason for me to close the gates."

Those who came, therefore, out of curiosity were greeted by the old man with these words: "Enter, gentlemen, enter; come and see the flowers; but touch nothing."

They hastened to take Tsieou at his word, and all the inhabitants of the village—men, women and children—wandered in every part of the garden.

But we will let them walk about, and return to Tchang-Oey, who, on the morning after the adventure, said to his men: "Yesterday that old ruffian threw me down. Is that an affront to forgive quickly? We must go back and demand the garden." The whole troop started out; but at the gate they heard the story of the wonder that had occurred. Tchang-Oey did not believe a word of it.

"Of course," he said, "this old scoundrel has the power to make spirits descend at his call! Very well;

let us hurry in and destroy his plants, and then the spirits will come again."

"Bravo!" cried all the band in chorus; and they rushed in. In full sight of the promenaders, the flowers exhibited their dazzling beauty, seeming to smile upon the bystanders. Tchang-Oey, notwithstanding his astonishment and alarm, did not change his mind; he still desired to be the master of the spot. A wicked thought came into his mind, and he called his band: "Let us go," he said.

"What," asked his friends who followed him, "have you lost your taste for this garden?"

"I have a plan," replied Tchang-Oey; "to-morrow this garden will belong to me. The Minister of War has sent out a circular giving an order to imprison all who practise magic in the provinces as well as in the army. I will send Tchang-Pe to the palace to denounce Tsieou-Sien. When the old gardener is tortured he will confess, and the garden will be offered for sale. Who will dare buy it? Nobody. It will be mine."

The judge occupied in prosecuting sorcery believed the story, and sent his policemen with Tchang-Pe to seize the gardener. They rushed upon him, garrotted him, as if he were a criminal, and, calling him vagabond and sorcerer, dragged him out of the garden without any explanation.

The grand judge began his inquiry in a menacing tone, accusing the old man of being a sorcerer, and bidding him confess his accomplices if he had any. No one who hears a bomb explode in the dark could be more surprised than Tsieou-Sien, who excused himself by saying he did not know what sorcery was in question.

"During the past few days," added the judge, "you have used magic to replace broken flowers on their stems, and now you have the face to deny it."

Tsieou-Sien then perceived that Tchang-Oey had done this work, and told the whole story to the judge, who would not believe it. At the judge's order the jailors sprang forward like tigers and roughly bound the prisoner's hands and feet. They were about to begin the torture when the judge was seized with a vertigo, and had to adjourn the matter till the following day, giving orders to lead the criminal to prison and give him the cangue.

Hou-Kong and Tan-Loo came to visit their friend to learn what had passed at the tribunal, and when he told them they said: "You are the victim of injustice, but this will lead to naught; to-morrow, we inhabitants of the village will sign a petition in your behalf."

"That will be useless," said Tsieou-Sien, moaning.

"Go, you scoundrels," interrupted the jailors. The

old man entered his cell weeping, and his neighbours went to find some wine and food for him, which they placed at the door of his prison. But the jailors regaled themselves with these provisions.

At night, stretched on the board that serves as a bed for the prisoners, more dead than alive and bound in such a way that he could move neither hands nor feet, in his bitterness of grief Tsieou-Sien cried: "Oh, Immortal Maiden, if thou hast pity on Tsieou-Sien, come then, come and protect his days of peril!"

Presently he saw the spirit coming gently towards him. "You wish me to take you from this danger," said the young maiden, and, at a sign from her hand, the cangue unloosed itself and fell. The prisoner glided out and fell at the feet of his liberator, touching the ground with his forehead.

"What is the name of the powerful Immortal?" he asked.

"I am the Fairy who presides over gardens under rule of Queen Tchy-Wan Mou. She had pity on you because of your tenderness for the flowers, and that is why she concerned herself with replacing the peonies on their stalks, very unwilling to believe that wicked men would use it for calumny. To-morrow, Tchang-Oey, who destroys plants and slanders men, will be taken from the living. His companions in evil will also experience great trouble. For yourself, practise

zealously the virtues which lead to a place among the Immortals; and in a few years I will make you pass into another condition of existence. Nourish yourself with flowers, and you will be able to rise in the air." And then she told him how to dress and feed.

Tsieou rose, but he no longer saw the maiden; she was on the wall of the prison, beckoning to him: "Come," she said, "mount and follow me. We will leave this place."

The old man began to climb, but he heard the tam-tam of the soldiers on patrol and voices crying: "The magician is escaping; stop him, stop him!" He became giddy, his hands lost their hold, he fell to the earth, and awoke on his bed of pain.

Tchang-Oey was delighted that the judge had found Tsieou-Sien guilty. "The old man," he said in irony, "is extremely peculiar; he has the kindness to spend the whole night on a bed of pain so that we may rejoice in his garden."

"During the past days," added his friends, "the garden has belonged to Tsieou-Sien; we have not been able to have our fling at frolic; but to-day it belongs to your Lordship. Let us give ourselves up to pleasure!"

Tchang-Oey relished their advice, and, ordering his servants to prepare a feast, they set out for the garden. The gate was open and they entered. Not a

single peony remained upon its stalk; everything looked as it did on the day they were destroyed. The petals were scattered in disorder all over the ground!

The young men cried: "A miracle!" Tchang-Oey took speech: "After what I have seen I am sure the old man is a sorcerer. As long as he takes pleasure in making us the victim of his magical tricks, very well, we will enjoy ourselves among the fallen flowers."

Immediately they spread a cloth upon the ground and placed mats around it, on which they sat and gave themselves up to eating and drinking. The feast lasted until the sun was sinking in the West, when a terrible hurricane suddenly arose. This frightful blast blowing upon the scattered leaves revived them in a second, and they were transformed into little maidens about a foot high.

"What a wonder!" cried Tchang-Oey's friends, terribly frightened. They were even more astonished when those tiny beings, revived by the wind, grew into tall maidens with beautiful, gracious faces, and whose garments were made of the bright flowers. They formed themselves in a row before the young men, who were stupefied with fear. One maiden, dressed in red, said: "We are sisters who have dwelt in this spot for years. We are grateful for the kindness that Tsieou-Sien has shown us, and we will defend him for ever! How is it? He has been

cruelly treated by vile slaves of an oppressor; by means of their slander he has been thrown into prison, where his life is threatened, and that for the criminal end of obtaining possession of this garden. Our enemies and his are before our eyes. My sisters, shall we not join our efforts to punish them? Are we not justified in thinking of the injury these reprobates have made him suffer? What do you think, my sisters?"

"Yes, we will set to work at once, and each one of us will conceal herself carefully."

They had scarcely finished speaking before they all simultaneously lifted their large sleeves and waved them in the air. These sleeves were several yards long, and produced a terrible wind, a violent, icy blast that penetrated the flesh.

"They are demons!" cried the young men as they left their festal cups and fled, each man for himself. One stumbled on some steps; another hurt his face against the branches of a tree; another fell, scrambled to his feet, and fell again. This confusion lasted for a long time. Finally, when everything was quiet, it was found that Tchang-Oey and Tchang-Pe were missing. The tempest roared and the twilight thickened, and they ran home as fast as they could, thinking only of their own safety.

The servants, however, called some sturdy peasant

boys, and returned with lanterns to search the garden. Under a thick clump of tall trees a lamentable voice was heard. Approaching with the lantern, they found Tchang-Pe. Tripped up by a root in his path, he fell and broke his head, and his wounds were too severe to permit him to move. Two of the farmer boys carried him home.

They investigated the entire garden. Perfect calm reigned; the thousand voices of the groves were silent, and the peonies were flowering on their stalks as formerly; not a single one had fallen. At the spot where the feast had been held, the cups and dishes were topsy-turvy, and the wine had been upset and was flowing over the ground. The men confessed it was a miracle.

They gathered up the dishes and made a second careful search, and then went around the garden four or five times; but they found no trace of the Fairy. How did the tornado arise? And did those female demons swallow it? In what spot were they hiding? They made another search; but what was there to do? Nothing but to go home and spend the night.

As they were about to pass through the gate, two persons entered with torches. They were Hou-Kong and Tan-Loo, who had heard vaguely about the adventure of the young lords with the demons, and came to find out just what had happened. They told the

old men everything. They were greatly frightened. "Stay," they said, "we will join you and make another search." They went through the garden again with the lanterns, but they found nothing and went out sighing.

As they passed out of the gate, they heard one of the farmer boys calling beneath the wall: "His Lordship is here!"

All rushed there tumultuously.

"Look!" said the peasant, with a gesture, "there is something hanging on that acacia. Isn't it our master's bonnet?"

It was surely it. Carrying the lights all along the wall, they found a man planted head downwards in a filthy ditch with his legs in the air.

Everyone recognised the boots and clothing of the young lord. While his followers were drawing the body of Tchang-Oey from the place, Hou-Kong and Tan-Loo secretly offered prayers to Buddha, and then they went away.

The wounds that Tchang-Pe received were mortal; he died during the night.

The following day the judge returned to take up Tsieou-Sien's case. A servant from the palace came to tell him that the accusator, Tchang-Oey, and the denunciator, Tchang-Pe, had died during the night, and related to him all the events of the fatal evening.

The frightened judge could hardly place faith in this report; but immediately a magistrate of the town, escorted by the inhabitants, advanced to present a petition signed by a hundred families, describing the whole story and showing how Tsieou-Sien had spent all his life in tender devotion to his flowers, and that, far from being a sorcerer, he was devoted to the practise of virtue.

The judge, delighted that no torture need be employed, ordered Tsieou-Sien to be released, and made him come to the Tribunal to receive his liberty. Then he gave him a decree, marked with his seal, to be placed upon his gate. This decree forbade any visitors damaging the trees and flowers. The entire assembly bowed to the earth before the judge. Tsieou-Sien then thanked his neighbours.

Hou-Kong and Tan-Loo entered the garden with Tsieou-Sien. At the sight of the peonies as beautiful and as full blown as ever, Tsieou-Sien was deeply moved. His friends brought wine to comfort him, and to pay them attention he gave a festival that lasted for several days.

After this Tsieou-Sien fed every day on flowers, renouncing everything roasted at the fire. His preserved fruits he sold, and spent the money in charities. In the course of several years, his hair became black again and his face renewed its youth.

One day—it was the fifteenth of the eighth moon—when the weather was magnificent and the sky so clear that not a cloud was to be seen, Tsieou-Sien was seated cross-legged among his flowers. Suddenly a breeze of good augury gently breathed and a mist arose like the light of torches. The air was filled with music and singing, a supernatural perfume scented the atmosphere, and blue phœnixes and white swans beat their wings and flew about. Gradually a white cloud, in the centre of which stood the Immortal Maiden, became visible. Around her fluttered flags sprinkled with precious stones, and a number of Immortal Maidens stood beside her with musical instruments in their hands. The old man prostrated himself in the dust, and the Goddess of Flowers said:

"Tsieou-Sien, the circle of merits which you have had to acquire has been fulfilled. You shall be transported to the celestial regions."

Then, in obedience to her command, he stepped upon the cloud. Immediately the cottage, the flowers, the trees—everything—rose slowly to the sky in the direction of the south.

Hou-Kong and Tan-Loo, as well as the other inhabitants of the village, prostrated themselves in reverence. For a long time they saw Tsieou-Sien, who made signs of farewell to them from the clouds. Then everything disappeared.

CHILD ROWLAND

THE sons of King Arthur were playing ball in the merry town of Carlisle, and their sister, Burd Ellen, with them. Now, it happened that Child Rowland gave the ball such a powerful kick with his foot that it went over the church. Burd Ellen went in search of the ball, but what was the consternation of her brothers when they found that she did not return! They sought for her east and west, and up and down, but she was not to be found.

At last, her eldest brother went to the Warlock, or Wizard, Merlin, and asked him if he knew where his sister, the fair Burd Ellen, was.

"The fair Burd Ellen," said the Warlock Merlin, "is carried away by the Fairies, and is now in the castle of the King of Elf-land; and it were too bold an undertaking for the stoutest Knight in Christendom to bring her back."

The brother, however, insisted upon undertaking the enterprise, and after receiving proper instructions

from Merlin, which he failed in observing, he set out on his perilous expedition and was nevermore seen.

The other brothers took the same course, and shared a similar fate, till it came to the turn of Child Rowland, who with great difficulty obtained the consent of his mother, for Queen Guinevere began to be afraid of losing all her children. Rowland, having received her blessing, girt on his father's celebrated sword, Excalibur, that never struck in vain, and repaired to Merlin's cave.

The Wizard gave him all the necessary instructions for his journey and conduct, the most important of which were that he should kill every person he met with after entering the land of Faerie, and should neither eat nor drink of what was offered him in that country, whatever his hunger or thirst might be; for if he tasted or touched in Elf-land, he must remain in the power of the elves, and never see middle-earth again.

Child Rowland faithfully promised to observe the instructions of Merlin, and he accordingly went to Elf-land, where he found, as the Wizard had foretold, the King's horseherd feeding his horses.

"Canst thou tell me," said Rowland, "where the castle of the King of Elf-land is?"

"I cannot," replied the horseherd, "but go a little

farther, and thou wilt come to a cowherd, and perhaps he will know."

When he had made this answer, Rowland, remembering his instructions, took his good sword and cut off the head of the horseherd. He then went a little farther and met with a cowherd, to whom he repeated the same question and obtained the same answer. Child Rowland then cut off the cowherd's head, and, having pursued exactly the same course with a shepherd, goatherd, and swineherd, he was referred by the last to a henwife, who, in reply to his question, said:

"Go on yet a little farther till you come to a round green hill, surrounded with terraces from the bottom to the top; go round it three times widershins,[1] and every time say, 'Open door, open door, and let me come in!' and the third time the door will open and you may go in."

Child Rowland immediately cut off the henwife's head in return for her intelligence, and, following her directions, a door in the hill opened, and he went in. As soon as he entered the door closed behind him, and he traversed a long passage, which was dimly but pleasantly lighted by crystallised rock, till he came to two wide and lofty folding doors, which stood ajar. He opened them and entered an immense hall, which seemed nearly as big as the hill itself. It was

[1] The contrary way to the course of the sun.

Sexterfin

the most magnificent apartment in all the land of Faerie, for the pillars were of gold and silver, and the keystones ornamented with clusters of diamonds. A gold chain hung from the middle of the roof, supporting an enormous lamp composed of one hollowed transparent pearl, in the midst of which was a large magical carbuncle that beautifully illumined the whole of the hall.

At the upper end of the hall, seated on a splendid sofa under a rich canopy, was his sister, the Burd Ellen, combing her yellow hair with a silver comb, who, immediately perceiving him, was sorrow-struck at the anticipation of his being destroyed by the King of Elf-land. And she informed him that he would certainly lose his life if the King found him in the hall. A long conversation then took place, and Rowland told her all his adventures, concluding his narrative with the observation that, after his long journey, he was *very hungry.*

On this the Burd Ellen shook her head, and looked sorrowfully at him; but, impelled by her enchantment, she rose up and procured him a golden bowl full of bread and milk. It was then that the Child Rowland remembered the instructions of the Warlock Merlin, and he passionately exclaimed: "Burd Ellen, I will neither eat nor drink till I set thee free!"

Immediately this speech was uttered, the folding-

doors of the hall burst open with tremendous violence, and in came the King of Elf-land—with

> "Fe, fi, fo, fum,
> I smell the blood of a Christian man.
> Be he dead, be he living, wi' my brand,
> I'll dash his brains from his brain-pan."

"Strike, then, Bogle, if thou darest," exclaimed the undaunted Child Rowland, and a furious combat ensued; but Rowland, by the help of his good sword, conquered the Elf King, sparing his life on condition that he would restore to him his three brothers and sister. The King joyfully consented, and, having disenchanted them by the anointment of a bright red liquor, they all four returned in triumph to merry Carlisle.

THE JACKAL, THE BARBER AND THE BRAHMIN

A BARBER and a Jackal once struck up a great friendship, which might have continued to this day had not the Jackal been so clever that the Barber never felt quite on equal terms with him, and suspected his friend of playing him many tricks. But this he was not able to prove.

One day the Jackal said to the Barber: "It would be a nice thing for us to have a garden of our own in which we might grow as many cucumbers, pumpkins and melons as we like. Why should we not buy one?"

The Barber answered: "Very well; here is money. Do you go and buy us a garden." So the Jackal took the Barber's money, and with it bought a fine garden, in which were cucumbers, pumpkins, melons, figs, and many other good fruits and vegetables. And he used to go there every day and feast to his heart's content. When, however, the Barber said to

him, "What is the garden like, which you bought with the money I gave you?" he answered: "There are very fine plants in it, but there is no fruit upon them; when the fruit is ripe I will let you know." This reply satisfied the Barber, who inquired no further at that time.

A little while afterwards, the Barber again asked the Jackal about the garden, saying: "I see you go down to that garden every day; is the fruit getting ripe?" "Oh dear no, not yet," answered the Jackal; "why, the plants are only just coming into blossom."

But all this time there was a great deal of fruit in the garden; and the Jackal went there every day, and ate as much as he could.

Again, a third time, when some weeks had passed, the Barber said to him: "Is there no ripe fruit in our garden yet?" "No," said the Jackal; "the blossoms have only just fallen; but the fruit is forming. In time we shall have a fine show of melons and figs there."

Then the Barber began to think the Jackal was deceiving him, and determined to see and judge for himself. So next day without saying anything about it, he followed him down to the garden.

Now it happened that very day the Jackal had invited all his friends to come and feast there. All

the animals in the neighbouring jungle had accepted the invitation; there they came trooping by hundreds and dozens, and were very merry indeed—running here and there, and eating all the melons, and cucumbers, and figs, and pumpkins in the place.

The Barber peeped over the hedge, and saw the assembled wild beasts, and his friend the Jackal entertaining them—talking to this one, laughing with that, and eating with all. The good man did not dare to attack the intruders, as they were many and powerful. But he went home at once, very angry, muttering to himself: "I'll be the death of that young jackanapes; he shall play no more pranks in my garden." And, watching his opportunity, he returned there, when the Jackal and all his friends had left, and tied a long knife to the largest of the cucumbers that still remained; then he went home, and said nothing of what he had seen.

Early next morning the Jackal thought to himself: "I'll just run down to the garden and see if there are no cucumbers or melons left." So he went there, and picking out the largest of the cucumbers, began to eat it.

Quick as thought, the long knife that was concealed by the cucumber leaves ran into him, cutting his muzzle, his neck, and his side.

"Ah, that nasty Barber!" he cried; "this must be

his doing!" And, instead of going home, he ran as fast as he could very far, far away into the jungle, and stretching himself out on a great flat rock, prepared to die.

But he did not die. Only for three whole days the pain in his neck and side was so great that he could not move; moreover, he felt very weak from the loss of blood.

At the end of the third day he tried to get up; but his own blood had sealed him to the stone! He endeavoured to move it by his struggles, but could not succeed. "Oh dear, oh dear!" he murmured, "to think that I should recover from my wound, only to die such a horrible death as this! Ah, me! here is the punishment of dishonesty!" And, having said this, he began to weep. It chanced, however, that the God of Rain heard his lamentations, and taking pity on the unfortunate animal, he sent a kindly shower, which wetting the stone, effected his release.

No sooner was the Jackal set free than he began to think what he could do to earn a livelihood—since he did not dare return to the Barber's house. It was not long before a feasible plan struck him: all around him was the mud made by the recent rain; he placed a quantity of it in a small *chattee*,[1] covered

[1] Jar.

the top over carefully with leaves (as people do jars of fresh butter), and took it into a neighbouring village to sell.

At the door of one of the first houses to which he came, stood a woman, to whom the Jackal said: "Woman, here is butter—beautiful fresh butter! Won't you buy some fresh butter?" She answered: "Are you sure it is quite fresh? Let me see it." But he replied: "It is perfectly fresh; but if you open the *chattee* now, it will be all spoilt by the time you want it. If you like to buy it, you may take it; —if not, I will sell it to some one else." The woman did want some fresh butter, and the *chattee* that the Jackal carried on his head was carefully fastened up, as if what it contained was of the best; and she knew if she opened it, it might spoil before her husband returned home; besides, she thought if the Jackal had intended to deceive her, he would have been more pressing in asking her to buy it. So she said: "Very well, give me the *chattee;* here is money for you. You are sure it is the best butter?" "It is the best of its kind," answered the Jackal, "only be sure you put it in some cool place and don't open it till it is wanted." And taking the money, he ran away.

A short time afterwards the woman discovered how she had been cheated, and was very angry; but the

Jackal was by that time far away, out of reach of punishment.

When his money was spent, the Jackal felt puzzled as to how to get a living, since no one would give him food, and he could buy none. Fortunately for him just then, one of the bullocks belonging to the village died. The Jackal found it lying dead by the roadside and began to eat it. He ate, and ate, and ate so much that at last he had got too far into the animal's body to be seen by passers-by. Now the weather was hot and dry. Whilst the Jackal was in it, the bullock's skin crinkled up so tightly with the heat, that it became too hard for him to bite through, and so he could not get out again.

The scavengers came out to bury the dead bullock. The Jackal who was inside it, fearing that if they caught him they would kill him, and that if they did not discover him he would be buried alive, called out: "People, people, take care how you touch me, for I am a great saint!" The poor people were very much frightened when they heard the dead bullock talking, and thought that some mighty spirit must indeed possess it. "Who are you, sir, and what do you want?" they cried. "I am a very holy saint," answered the Jackal, "I am also the god of your village, and I am very angry with you because you never worship me nor bring me offerings." "What

offerings will please you?" they cried. "Only tell us, and we will bring you whatever you like." "Good," he replied, "then you must fetch here plenty of rice, plenty of flowers, and a nice fat chicken. Place them as an offering beside me, and pour a great deal of water over them, as you do at your most solemn feasts, and then I will forgive you your sins." The scavengers did as they were commanded. They placed some rice and flowers and the best chicken they could find beside the bullock and poured water over it. As soon as the bullock's skin was wet it split and, to the surprise of all the worshippers, the Jackal jumped out, and seizing the chicken in his mouth ran away into the jungle.

After this the Jackal found his way back to his own village, where the Barber lived, and for some time he prowled around the houses every night and lived upon any bones he could find. One night, his old friend the Barber (who had never forgiven him for stealing the fruit from the garden) caught him in a great net. "Aha!" cried the Barber, "I've got you at last my friend! You won't get away this time! Here, wife, see what a prize I've got!"

The Barber's wife came running to the door, and the Barber gave her the Jackal (after he had tied his legs with a strong rope) and said: "Take this animal into the house, and don't let him escape, while

I find a knife to kill him." No sooner had the Barber gone, than the Jackal said: "Ah, good woman, your husband will soon return and put me to death. For the love of heaven loosen the rope around my feet, for one minute only, and let me drink a little water from that puddle by the door, for my throat is parched with thirst." "No, no, friend Jackal," answered the Barber's wife, "I know well enough what you'll do. You will run away and when my husband finds that you have gone, he will beat me."

"Indeed, indeed, I will not run away," he replied: "Ah, kind mother, have pity on me—only for one little moment." Then the Barber's wife thought: "Well, it is hard not to grant the poor beast's last request." She untied the Jackal's legs and held him by a rope while he went to drink from the puddle. But he gave a quick jump and a twist and a pull which jerked the rope from her hands,—and then he escaped once more to the jungle.

He roamed about until he wandered far away from the country where the Barber lived. One day he came to a cottage where lived a poor Brahmin who had seven daughters. As the Jackal passed by, he heard the Brahmin say to himself: "O dear me, what can I do for my seven daughters? I shall have to support them all my life, for they are much too poor ever to get married. If a dog or a jackal were

to offer to take one off my hands, he should have her." Next day the Jackal called on the Brahmin, and said: "You said yesterday if a dog or a jackal were to offer to marry one of your daughters, you would let him have her; will you therefore accept me as a son-in-law?"

The poor Brahmin was greatly embarrassed, for although he had said these words he never dreamed of being placed in such a position. Just at this moment the daughters began to cry for bread and the father had nothing to give them, and, observing his distress, the Jackal said: "Let me marry one of your seven daughters and I will take care of her. It will leave you one less to provide for, and I will see that she never needs food." Then the Brahmin's heart was softened, and he gave the Jackal his eldest daughter in marriage, and the Jackal took her home to his den in the high rocks.

Now you will say there never was a Jackal so clever as this. Very true; for this was not a common Jackal, or he could never have done all the things you have heard about. This Jackal was in fact a great Rajah in disguise, who, to amuse himself, took the form of a Jackal; for he was a great Magician as well as a great Rajah.

The den to which he took the Brahmin's daughter looked like quite a common hole in the rocks on the

outside; but inside it was a splendid palace, adorned with silver and gold and ivory and precious stones. But even his own wife did not know that he was not always a Jackal, for the Rajah never took his human form except every morning very early, when he used to take off the Jackal skin, and wash it and brush it, and put it on again. After he and his wife had lived together happily for some time, who should the Jackal see one day but his father-in-law, the old Brahmin, climbing up the rocks to pay him a visit. The Jackal was vexed, because he knew the Brahmin was very poor and supposed he had come to beg,—which was the case.

"Don't go into my cave," said the Jackal, "it is but a poor hole, not fit for you to enter (he did not wish his father-in-law to see his fine palace). I will call my wife, that you may see that I have not eaten her up, and she and you and I will talk over the matter, and see what we can do for you."

So the Brahmin, the Brahmin's daughter and the Jackal sat down on the hillside together, and the Brahmin said: "I don't know what to do to get food for myself, my wife and my six daughters. Son-in-law Jackal, can't you help me?"

"It is a difficult business," answered the Jackal; "but I will do what I can for you." He ran into the cave and fetched a large melon, which he gave to the

The Jackal took her to his den

Brahmin, saying: "Father-in-law, you must plant this melon in your garden, and when it grows up, sell all the fruit you find upon it, and that will bring you in some money."

So the Brahmin took the melon home and planted it in his garden. By the next day it had grown into a fine plant covered with hundreds of beautiful ripe melons. The Brahmin, his wife and family were overjoyed.

Now it chanced that a woman who lived in a neighbouring house wanted some melons and bought two or three from the Brahmin's wife. She took them home and cut them open—but lo and behold! marvel of marvels! what a wonderful sight! Instead of the thick white pulp she expected to see, the whole inside of the melon was composed of diamonds, rubies and emeralds; and all the seeds were enormous pearls.

She locked her door, and taking all the money she had, ran back to the Brahmin's wife, and said: "Those were very good melons you sold me: I like them so much that I will buy all the others on the melon plant." So she took home all the rest of the melons. Now this cunning woman told none of her friends of the treasure she had found, and the poor, stupid Brahmin and his family did not know what they had lost, for they had never thought of cutting one of the melons open; so that for all the precious stones they

sold, they only got a few pennies. Next day when they looked out of the window, the melon plant was again covered with fine, ripe melons, and the same woman came again and bought them all. This went on for several days. There were so many melons, and all the melons were so full of precious stones that the woman who bought them had enough to fill the whole of one room in her house with diamonds, rubies, emeralds and pearls.

At last, however, the wonderful melon plant began to wither, and when the woman came to buy melons one morning, the Brahmin's wife was obliged to say in a sad voice: "Alas! there are no more melons on our melon plant."

That day the Brahmin and his wife had no money to buy food with and they felt very unhappy to think that the fine melon plant had withered. But the Brahmin's youngest daughter, who was a clever girl, thought: "Though there are no more melons fit to sell on our melon plant, perhaps I may be able to find one or two, which, if cooked will give us something for dinner." So she went out to look, and, searching carefully amongst the thick leaves, found two or three withered little melons still remaining. These she took into the house, and began to cut them up, when, more wonderful than wonderful! within each little melon she found a number of small emeralds,

rubies, diamonds and pearls! The girl called her father and mother and her five sisters, crying: "See what I have found. See these precious stones and pearls! I dare say all the melons we sold were as good or better than these! No wonder that woman was so anxious to buy them all. See father—see mother—see sisters!"

Then they were all overjoyed to see the treasure; but the Brahmin said: "What a pity we have lost all the benefit of my son-in-law the Jackal's good gift by not knowing its worth. I will go at once to that woman, and try and make her give us back the melons she took."

So he went to the woman and said: "Give me back the melons you took from me. I did not know their worth." She answered: "I don't know what you mean." He replied: "You were very deceitful; you bought melons full of precious stones, and you only paid the price of common melons:—give me some of them back, I pray you." But she said: "I bought common melons from your wife, and made them all into soup long ago; so talk no more nonsense about jewels, but go about your business." And she turned him out of the house. Yet all this time she had a whole room full of the emeralds, diamonds, rubies, and pearls that she had found in the melons.

The Brahmin returned home, and said to his wife:

"I cannot make that woman give me back any of the melons you sold her; but give me the precious stones our daughter has just found, and I will sell them to a jeweller and bring home some money." So he went to the town and took the precious stones to a jeweller, saying: "What will you give me for these?" But the jeweller said: "How could such a poor man as you become possessed of such precious stones? You must have stolen them: you are a thief; you have stolen these from my shop, and now you want to sell them to me!"

"No, no, sir; indeed no, sir," cried the Brahmin: "Thief! thief!" shouted the jeweller. "In truth, no, sir," said the Brahmin, "my son-in-law, the Jackal, gave me a melon plant; and in one of the melons I found these jewels." "I don't believe a word you say," screamed the jeweller (and he began to beat the Brahmin, whom he held by the arm); "give up those jewels which you have stolen from my shop." "No, I won't," roared the Brahmin, "oh! oh-o! oh-o-o! don't beat me so; I didn't steal them." But the jeweller was determined to get the jewels; so he beat the Brahmin and called the police who came running to his assistance, and shouted till a great crowd collected around his shop. Then he said to the Brahmin: "Give me up the jewels you stole from me, or I'll give you to the police and have you sent

to jail." The Brahmin tried to tell his story about his son-in-law, the Jackal, but, of course, nobody believed him; and he was obliged to give the precious stones to the jeweller, in order to escape. He then ran home as fast as he could; and everybody thought the jeweller was very kind to let him off so easily.

All his family were very unhappy when they heard what had befallen him. But his wife said: "You had better go again to our son-in-law, the Jackal, and see what he can do for us." So the next day the Brahmin climbed the hill again, as he had done before, and went to call upon the Jackal. When the Jackal saw him coming, he was not very well pleased. He went to meet him, and said: "Father-in-law, I did not expect to see you so soon again!" "I merely came to see how you were," answered the Brahmin, "and to tell you how poor we are; and how glad we should be of any help you can give us." "What have you done with all the melons I gave you?" asked the Jackal. "Ah!" answered the Brahmin, "that is a sad story!" And, beginning at the beginning, he related how they had sold almost all the melons, without knowing their value; and how the few precious stones they had found had been taken from him by the jeweller. When the Jackal heard this, he laughed very much, and said: "I see it is no use giving such unfortunate people as you gold or

jewels, for they will only bring you into trouble. Come, I'll give you a more useful present." So, running into his cave, he fetched a small jar and gave it to the Brahmin, saying: "Take this *chattee;* whenever you, or any of the family are hungry, you will always find in it as good a dinner as this." And putting his paw into the *chattee,* he pulled out a currie and rice, pilau,[1] and, all sorts of good things, enough to feast a hundred men; and the more he took out of the *chattee,* the more remained inside.

When the Brahmin saw the jar and smelt the good dinner, his eyes glistened with joy; and he embraced the Jackal, saying: "Dear son-in-law, you are the only support of our house." And he carried his new present carefully home.

After this, the family led a very happy life, for they never wanted good food. Every day the Brahmin found inside the *chattee* a most delicious dinner.

But it happened that hard by there lived another Brahmin, a very great man, who was in the Rajah's confidence; and this man smelt daily a very nice dinner, which greatly puzzled him. The rich Brahmin thought it smelt even nicer than his own dinner, for which he paid so much; and yet it seemed to come from the poor Brahmin's little cottage. So one day he determined to find out all about it; and going to

[1] Meat cooked with almonds, raisins, and spice.

call on his neighbour, he said: "Every day, about twelve o'clock, I smell such a very nice dinner—much nicer than my own; and it seems to come from your house. You must live on very good things I think, although you seem so poor."

Then, in the pride of his heart, the poor Brahmin invited his rich neighbour to come and dine with him; and lifting the magic jar from the shelf, took out of it such delicate fare as the rich Brahmin had never before tasted. And in an evil hour he told of the wonderful properties of the jar which his son-in-law, the Jackal, had given him; and how it never was empty! No sooner had the rich Brahmin heard this than he went to the Rajah, and said: "There is a poor Brahmin in the town who possesses a wonderful *chattee*, which is always filled with the most delicious dinner. I should not feel authorised to deprive him of it; but if it pleased your Highness to take it from him, he could not complain." The Rajah hearing this said: "I should very much like to see this wonderful *chattee*." And he accompanied the rich Brahmin to the poor Brahmin's house.

The poor Brahmin was overjoyed at being noticed by the Rajah himself, and gladly exhibited the various excellences of the *chattee;* but no sooner did the Rajah taste the dinner it contained, than he ordered his guards to seize it and take it to the palace, not-

withstanding the Brahmin's tears and protestations; thus, for a second time, he lost the benefit of his son-in-law's gift.

When the Rajah had gone, the Brahmin said to his wife: "There is nothing to be done but to go again to the Jackal and see if he can help us." "If you don't take care, you'll put him out of all patience," she answered, "I can't think why you need have gone talking about our *chattee*."

When the Jackal heard the Brahmin's story, he became very cross and said: "What a stupid old man you were to say anything about the *chattee;* but see, here is another, which may aid you to get back the first. Take care of it, for this is the last time I will help you." And he gave the Brahmin a *chattee*, in which was a stout stick tied to a very strong rope. "Take this," he said, "into the presence of those who deprived you of my other gifts, and when you open the *chattee*, command the stick to beat them; this it will do so effectually that they will gladly return you what you have lost; only take care not to open the *chattee* when you are alone, or the stick that is in it will punish your rashness."

The Brahmin thanked his son-in-law, and took away the *chattee;* but he found it hard to believe all that had been said. So, going through the jungle on his way home, he uncovered it just to peep in and see if

the stick were really there. No sooner had he done this than out jumped the stick; the rope seized him and bound him to a tree, and the stick beat him and beat him and beat him, until he was nearly killed. "Oh dear! Oh dear," screamed the Brahmin, "what an unlucky man I am! Oh dear! oh dear! stop, please stop! good stick, stop! what a very good stick this is!" But the stick would not stop, but beat him so much that he could hardly crawl home again.

Then the Brahmin put the rope and stick back again into the *chattee*, and sent for his rich neighbour and to the Rajah, saying: "I have a new *chattee*, much better than the old one; do come and see what a fine one it is." And the rich Brahmin and the Rajah thought: "This is something good; doubtless there is a choice dinner in this *chattee* also, and we will take it from this foolish man as we did the other." So they went down to meet the Brahmin in the jungle, taking with them all their followers and attendants. Then the Brahmin uncovered his *chattee*, saying: "Beat, stick, beat—beat them every one!" and the stick jumped out, and the rope jumped out, and the rope caught hold of the Rajah, and the rich Brahmin, and all their attendants, and tied them fast to the trees, and the stick ran from one to another beating, beating, beating, beating the Rajah, beating his courtiers, beating the rich Brahmin, beating his at-

tendants, and beating all their followers; while the poor Brahmin cried with all his might: "Give me back my *chattee*—give me back my *chattee!*"

The Rajah and his people were very much frightened, and thought they were going to be killed. So the Rajah said to the Brahmin: "Take away your stick, only take away your stick, and you shall have back your *chattee.*" Then the Brahmin put the stick and rope back into the *chattee*, and the Rajah returned him the dinner-making *chattee.* And all the people felt very much afraid of the Brahmin and respected him very much.

Then he took the *chattee* containing the rope and stick to the house of the woman who had bought the melons, and the rope caught her, and the stick beat her, and the Brahmin cried: "Return me those melons; return me those melons." And the woman said: "Only make your stick stop beating me, and you shall have back all the melons." So he ordered the stick back into the *chattee*, and she returned him a whole roomful of melons full of diamonds, pearls, emeralds, and rubies. The Brahmin took them home to his wife, and going to town, with the help of his stick, forced the jeweller to give him back the little emeralds, diamonds, rubies and pearls he had seized. Having accomplished this, he returned to his family, and from this time they all lived happily.

THE JACKAL, BARBER, AND BRAHMIN

One day, the Jackal's wife invited her six sisters to pay her a visit. Now the youngest sister was cleverer than the others; and it happened that, very early in the morning, she saw her brother-in-law, the Jackal, take off the jackal-skin, and wash it and brush it and hang it up to dry; and when he had taken off the jackal-skin coat, he looked the handsomest Prince that ever was seen. Then, his little sister-in-law ran quickly and quietly, and stole away the jackal-skin coat and threw it on the fire and burnt it. And she awoke her sister, and said: "Sister, sister, your husband is no longer a Jackal; see, that is he standing by the door."

So the Jackal's wife ran to the door to meet her husband, and because the jackal's skin was burnt, and he could wear it no longer, he continued to be a man for the rest of his life, and gave up playing all jackal-like pranks; and he and his wife and his father and mother and sisters-in-law lived very happily all the rest of their days.

THE THREE LITTLE MEN IN THE WOOD

NCE upon a time there was a man who had lost his wife and had one daughter; and there was a widow who also had one daughter. The maidens were brought up together, and played as if they had been sisters.

One day the widow said to the man's daughter, "Go and tell your father that I will marry him; then thou canst wash in milk and drink wine, but my child shall wash in water and drink water."

Then the maiden went home and told her father what the woman had said.

Then, said the man, "What shall we do? Marriage is a happy thing, but it is also a great trouble.

He thought for a while, and at last, finding he could make no excuse, he pulled off his boot, and said, "Take this boot—there is a hole in the sole—and go with it to the loft; then hang it on a large nail, and

pour water into it. If it holds the water, then I will again take a wife; but if it runs through the hole, I will not marry."

Then the maiden did as her father had told her, and the water drew the hole together, so that the boot became full, even to the brim, and she went to inform her father what had occurred.

As soon as he heard what had happened, he rose and went himself to see the boot; and, finding she had spoken the truth, he went at once to the widow, and they were married.

On the next morning, the husband's daughter had milk placed for her to wash in and wine to drink, but the wife's daughter had water only. On the second morning, there was nothing but water for both of them; but on the third day, the wine and milk were for the wife's daughter, while her step-child had nothing but water, and so it continued.

In the heart of the wife a bitter hatred soon arose against her step-daughter, because she was beautiful and amiable, and her own child was ugly and disagreeable.

One day in the winter, when the ground was frozen hard, and mountain and valley lay white with snow, the step-mother made a dress of paper. Then she called the maiden, and said to her, " Just put on this dress, and go out into the woods and bring me that

basket full of strawberries. I have a longing for them."

"Oh dear," replied the girl, "strawberries do not grow in winter, when the ground is frozen and the hedges are covered with snow. Besides, how can I go in this paper dress? it is so cold out of doors that even one's breath freezes, and the wind will cut through this thin dress, and the thorns tear my skin."

"Don't answer me," said the step-mother. "Get off as fast as you can, and let me not see you again till you get the basket full of strawberries." Then she gave her step-daughter a small piece of dry bread, and said, "That will be enough for you to-day; now go."

"Ah," thought the wicked woman, "she will be frozen, or starved with hunger, and will never come before my eyes again."

Now, as the maiden was always obedient, she put on the paper dress and went out. Far and wide there could be seen nothing but snow, not even a little blade of green grass; but she walked on, and at last came to a small cottage in the wood, from which peeped out three strange little dwarfs.

She wished them "Good-day," and knocked timidly at the door. "Come in," they cried, and she stepped in and seated herself on a stool near the stove, for she wanted to get warm and eat her breakfast. Pres-

ently one of the little men said to her, "Give us some of your bread, maiden."

"Willingly," she replied. So she divided her piece of bread, and gave them half.

Presently they asked again, "What brought you into the forest on such a wintry day as this, with only a thin dress?"

"Ah," she answered, "I was sent into the wood to fill this basket with strawberries, and I dare not go home again till I have filled it."

When she had eaten her bread, they gave her a broom, and said, "Go and sweep the snow away from the back door."

As soon as she was gone, the little men began to talk together about her. One said, "What shall we give her, as she is so good and shared her bread with us?" "I will promise," said the first, "that she shall grow every day more beautiful." "And I will grant," said the second, "that every time she opens her mouth to speak, a piece of gold shall fall out." Then the third promised that a king's son should make her his wife.

The maiden did as the dwarfs bade her, and swept away the snow from the pathway behind the cottage, and at last what do you think she found?—rich ripe strawberries of a deep red lying before her on the snow.

She quickly and joyfully filled her basket, and, after shaking hands with the little men, she thanked them for their kindness, and ran home to show her step-mother what she had brought for her. As she entered the house, and said "Good-evening," a piece of gold immediately fell from her mouth on the floor.

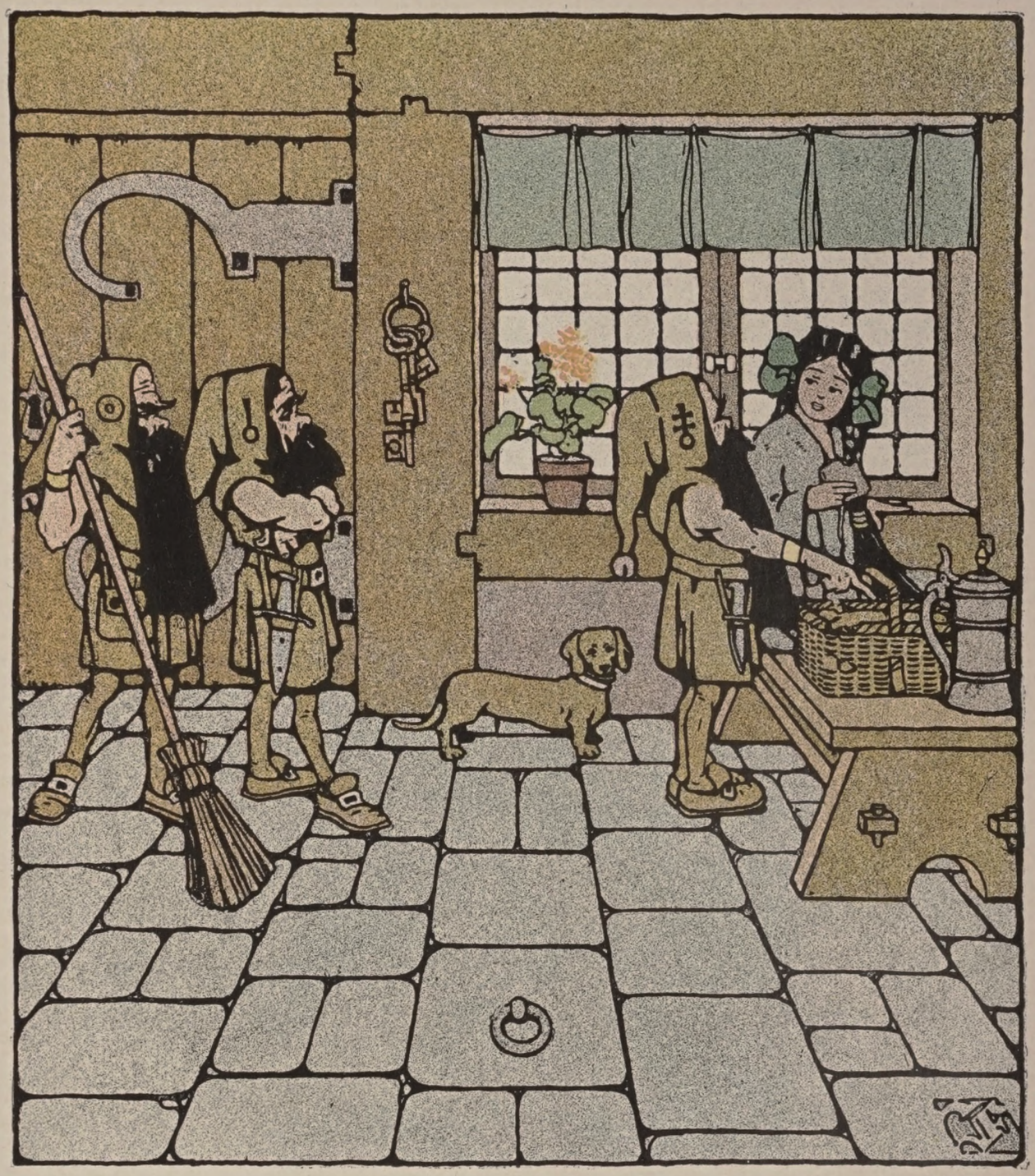
Her step-mother was astonished, and then the maiden related what had happened to her in the wood, while at every word she uttered a piece of gold fell from her mouth, so that in a very short time the whole room was covered with it.

"You will be proud and haughty," said the step-sister, "now that you can scatter gold in this way;" but she was secretly jealous about it, and asked her mother to let her go into the wood to find straw-berries.

"No, my dear little daughter," replied the mother, "it is too cold for you; you might be frozen."

But the girl gave her mother no peace, till at last she allowed her to go. Not, however, till she had made her dress herself in a warm fur jacket, and given her bread and butter and cake to eat on the way.

The maiden went to the wood, and walked on till she reached the cottage. The three little men saw her coming, although she knew it not; and without guessing or seeing anything wrong, she walked right



One of the little men asks for bread

into the room, and seated herself by the stove, and began eating her bread and butter and cake.

"Give us a little of your nice breakfast," said one of the little men.

"I have not enough for myself," she replied; "how can I give you any?"

When she had finished, they said, "There is a broom in the corner; take it, and sweep the pathway at the back door."

"Go and do it yourself," she cried; "I am not your servant."

However, when she saw that they were not going to give her anything, she went out.

The little men began to talk about her. "What shall we give her?" asked one; "for she has such a naughty, wicked, and envious heart." "Then," said the first, "I ordain that she shall grow more ugly every day." "I grant," said the second, "that at every word she speaks a toad shall spring out of her mouth;" while the third promised that she should meet with an unlucky death.

The maiden searched in vain for strawberries; so she went home sullen and out of temper. On opening her mouth to relate all that had happened to her in the wood, at each word a toad sprang out on the floor, so that she became disgusting to everyone.

After this, the step-mother became more spiteful

against her husband's daughter than ever, and thought only of the means to make her suffer pain and annoyance for her beauty grew more and more daily.

At last she took a kettle, and set it on the fire to boil yarn. As soon as it was ready, she called the poor girl, and, hanging the thread on her shoulder, gave her an axe, and told her to go to the frozen river, break a hole in the ice, and wash the thread.

Always obedient, she took the axe and went to break a hole in the ice. But as she struck the first blow, a beautiful carriage passed by, in which sat a young king. He stopped the carriage when he saw the maiden, and said, "My child, why are you out here in the cold? and what are you doing?"

"I am a poor maiden," she replied; "and I am cleaning yarn."

Then the king was full of pity, and seeing how beautiful she was, he said, "Will you ride with me?"

"Oh yes," she replied, "with all my heart;" for she was overjoyed at the thought of escaping out of sight of her step-mother and sister. Then she entered the carriage, and the king drove her to his castle. And in a very short time after the king asked her to be his wife, and the marriage was celebrated with great splendour, as the little men in the wood had foretold.

In about a year the young queen had a little son, of

whom she was very fond. And the step-mother, who had heard of her good fortune, went with her daughter to the castle, to make a long visit.

But one day, while the king was from home and no one in the castle near, the wicked woman laid hold of the queen by the head, and her daughter held her by the feet; then they lifted her out of bed, and threw her from the window into a stream that flowed on one side of the castle.

Then the step-mother placed her own daughter in the bed and covered her over with the clothes till only the top of her head could be seen. When the king came back and wished to speak to his wife, the mother exclaimed, "Hush, hush! you must not disturb her, she is in a fever." However, the next morning the king would see his wife, although he never suspected anything; but when he spoke to her and she answered him, there sprung out of her mouth at each word a toad, instead of the pieces of gold as before. Then the king inquired what could be the cause of this, and the old woman said that if she could have another sound sleep she would soon be all right again. So the king left her. That night the king's page saw something like a duck swimming across the moat under the king's window, and heard a voice saying:

"'King, dost thou watchful keep!'
Or dost thou close thine eyes in sleep?"

There was no answer, and the spectre said again, "How are my visitors?"

Then the page replied, "They are fast asleep."

Again it spoke: "How is my little child?"

"He sleeps in his cradle," answered the page.

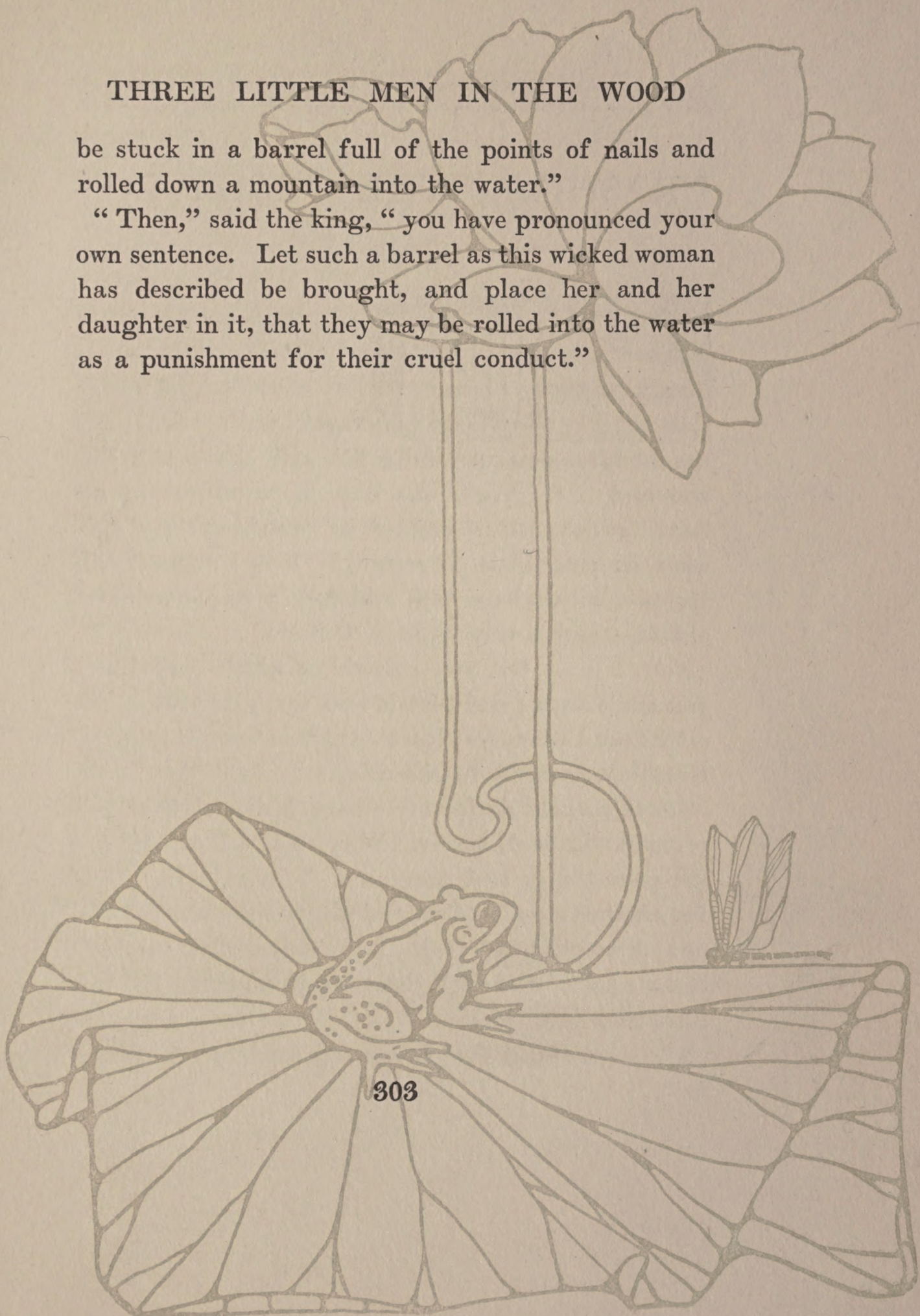
Then the apparition took the form of the young queen, went into the infant's room, took him up and fed him, shook up his little bed, laid him to sleep, covered him warmly with the clothes, and then swam back again through the moat in the form of a duck.

All this occurred again the next night; but when she appeared the third time, she spoke to the page and said, "Go and call the king, and tell him to take his sword and swing it three times over me from the window-sill." Then ran the page quickly and told the king. He came immediately with his sword and swung it three times over the apparition, and after the third time there stood before him his own beautiful wife, healthy, and charming as ever. Oh, how happy the king was now! He kept the queen concealed in the room where his baby lived till Sunday, when he was to be bastised. As soon as the ceremony was over he said to the old step-mother, "What does that man deserve who takes another out of his bed and throws him into the water?"

"He deserves nothing better," she replied, "than to

be stuck in a barrel full of the points of nails and rolled down a mountain into the water."

"Then," said the king, "you have pronounced your own sentence. Let such a barrel as this wicked woman has described be brought, and place her and her daughter in it, that they may be rolled into the water as a punishment for their cruel conduct."



URASHIMA, THE FISHER-BOY

LONG, long ago there lived on the coast of the sea of Japan a young fisherman named Urashima, a kindly lad and clever with his rod and line. Well, one day he went out in his boat to fish. But instead of catching any fish, what do you think he caught? Why! a great big tortoise, with a hard shell and such a funny wrinkled old face and a tiny tail.

Now I must tell you something which very likely you don't know; and that is that tortoises always live a thousand years—at least Japanese tortoises do. So Urashima thought to himself:

"A fish would do for my dinner just as well as this tortoise—in fact, better. Why should I go and kill the poor thing, and prevent it from enjoying itself for another nine hundred and ninety-nine years? No, no! I won't be so cruel. I am sure mother wouldn't like me to." And with these words, he threw the tortoise back into the sea.

The next thing that happened was that Urashima

went to sleep in his boat; for it was one of those hot summer days when almost everybody enjoys a nap of an afternoon. And as he slept, there came up from beneath the waves a beautiful girl, who got into the boat and said:

"I am the daughter of the Sea-God, and I live with my father in the Dragon Palace beyond the waves. It was not a tortoise that you caught just now, and so kindly threw back into the water instead of killing it. It was myself. My father, the Sea-God, had sent me to see whether you were good or bad. We now know that you are a good, kind boy who doesn't like to do cruel things; and so I have come to fetch you. You shall marry me, if you like; and we will live happily together for a thousand years in the Dragon Palace beyond the deep blue sea."

So Urashima took one oar and the Sea-God's daughter took the other, and they rowed, and they rowed, and they rowed till at last they came to the Dragon's Palace where the Sea-God lived and ruled as King over all the dragons and the tortoises and the fishes.

Oh dear! what a lovely place it was! The walls of the Palace were of coral, the trees had emeralds for leaves and rubies for berries, the fishes' scales were of silver, and the dragons' tails of solid gold. Just think of the very most beautiful things that you have ever

seen, and put them all together, and then you will know what this Palace looked like. And it all belonged to Urashima; for was he not the son-in-law of the Sea-God, the husband of the lovely Dragon Princess?

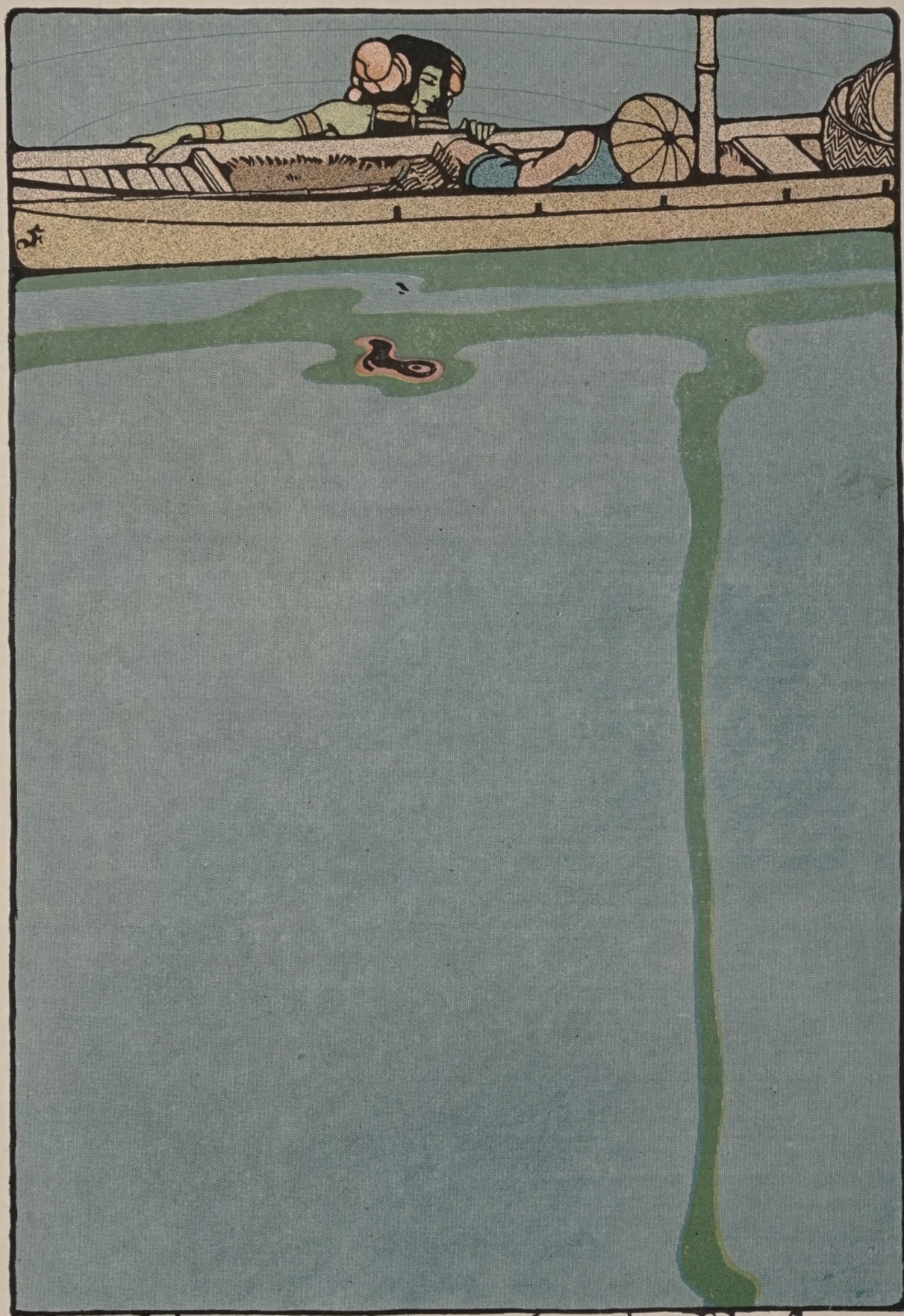
Well, they lived on happily for three years, wandering about every day among the beautiful trees with emerald leaves and ruby berries. But one morning Urashima said to his wife:

"I am very happy here. Still I want to go home and see my father and mother and brothers and sisters. Just let me go for a short time, and I'll soon be back again."

"I don't like you to go," said she, "I am very much afraid that something dreadful will happen. However, if you will go, there is no help for it. Only you must take this box, and be very careful not to open it. If you open it, you will never be able to come back here."

So Urashima promised to take great care of the box, and not to open it on any account; and then, getting into his boat, he rowed off, and at last landed on the shore of his own country.

But what had happened while he had been away? Where had his father's cottage gone to? What had become of the village where he used to live? The mountains indeed were there as they were before; but the trees on them had been cut down. The little brook



Urashima went to sleep in his boat

that ran close by his father's cottage was still running; but there were no women washing clothes in it any more. It seemed very strange that everything should have changed so much in three short years. So as two men chanced to pass along the beach, Urashima went up to them and said:

"Can you tell me please where Urashima's cottage, that used to stand here, has been moved to?"

"Urashima?" said they; "why! it was four hundred years ago that he was drowned out fishing. His parents, and his brothers, and their grandchildren are all dead long ago. It is an old, old story. How can you be so foolish as to ask after his cottage? It fell to pieces hundreds of years ago."

Then it suddenly flashed across Urashima's mind that the Sea-God's Palace beyond the waves, with its coral walls and its ruby fruit and its dragons with tails of solid gold, must be part of Fairy-Land, and that one day there was probably as long as a year in this world, so that his three years in the Sea-God's Palace had really been hundreds of years. Of course there was no use in staying at home, now that all his friends were dead and buried, and even the village had passed away. So Urashima was in a great hurry to get back to his wife, the Dragon Princess beyond the sea.

But which was the way? He couldn't find it with no one to show it to him.

"Perhaps," thought he, "if I open the box which she gave me, I shall be able to find the way."

So he disobeyed her orders not to open the box,—or perhaps he forgot them, foolish boy that he was. Anyhow he opened the box; and what do you think came out of it?

Nothing but a white cloud which floated away over the sea. Urashima shouted to the cloud to stop, rushed about and screamed with sorrow; for he remembered now what his wife had told him, and how, after opening the box, he should never be able to go to the Sea-God's Palace again.

But soon he could neither run nor shout any more. Suddenly his hair grew as white as snow, his face got wrinkled, and his back bent like that of a very old man. Then his breath stopped short, and he fell down dead on the beach.

Poor Urashima! He died because he had been foolish and disobedient. If only he had done as he was told, he might have lived another thousand years.

Wouldn't you like to go and see the Dragon Palace beyond the waves, where the Sea-God lives and rules as King over the Dragons and the tortoises and the fishes, where the trees have emeralds for leaves and rubies for berries, where the fishes' tails are of silver and the dragons' tails all of solid gold?

THE TRAVELLING COMPANION

THERE was once a farm-boy who dreamt that he would marry a princess far away in the land, and she was as pink and white as milk and blood, and so rich that there never could come an end to her riches. When he awoke, he thought that she still stood there alive before him, and she was so elegant and beautiful that he felt he could not exist without her. So he sold what he had, and went out into the world to seek for her.

He went far, and farther than far, and in the winter he came to a land where all the highways were quite straight, without any turnings. After he had gone on for a mile or two he came to a town, and outside by the church door there lay a great block of ice, in the inside of which a corpse was lying, and all the church folk spat upon it as they went by. The boy wondered at this, and when the priest came out of the church he asked him what was the meaning of it.

"He was a sad wrong-doer," said the priest; "he is rightly served for his wickedness, and there he lies to be mocked and derided."

"What has he done, then?" said the boy.

"When he was alive he was a vintner," the priest said, "and he mixed his wine with water."

The boy thought that that was not such a terrible deed. "And when he had paid for it with his life," he said, "might they not just as well have let him lie in consecrated ground and be at peace?"

But the priest said that could not be done by any manner of means, for there would have to be people to break him out of the ice, and money to pay for the consecrated ground; the sexton would want pay for digging the grave, the bell-ringers for ringing the bells, the clerk for chanting, and the priest for sprinkling earth on the coffin.

"Do you think any one would pay all that for a rightly served sinner?" asked he.

"Yes," the boy said, "if you will only put him in the ground, I will pay for the whole thing from the little I possess."

The priest still would not do it; but when the boy came with two men and asked, so that they were witness to it, whether he could refuse to scatter earth on the coffin, he answered that he dared not do it.

So they broke the vintner out of the lump of ice,

and laid him in consecrated ground; they rang the bells and sang over him; the priest scattered earth upon his coffin, and they drank the burying-ale until they both laughed and cried with one another. But when the boy had paid for it all he had not many pence left in his pocket.

He went on his way again; but he had not gone far before there came a man after him, asking if he did not think it lonely to be walking by himself in that way.

The boy did not think so, for he had always something to think about, he said.

The man asked if he would not have a servant.

"No," said the boy, "I am used to being my own servant, so I don't need one; and if I were ever so anxious to have one I could not afford it, for I have no money with which to pay his keep and his wages."

"You do want a servant, I know that better than you," said the man, "and you want one you can rely on through thick and thin. If you will not have me for a servant, you can take me as a companion; I promise you you shall benefit by me, and it shall not cost you a halfpenny. I will support myself, and you shall have nothing to do with either my food or my clothing."

On such terms he would willingly have him for a

companion; so afterwards they travelled together, and the man generally went before and showed the way.

When they had travelled far away into the land, over hill and dale, they came to a steep mountain. The companion knocked on it and asked it to open. It opened for them, and when they had gone far into the mountain, a troll woman came with a chair, saying:—

"Sit down if you please, you must be tired."

"Sit down yourself," said the man.

So she had to sit down, and when she had done so, had to stop there, for the chair was one that would not let anyone up who sat upon it. In the meantime they went about in the mountain, and the travelling companion looked around till he saw a sword hanging over a door. That he must needs have; so he promised the troll woman that he would release her if he might take it.

"No," she screamed, "ask me for anything else! You can have anything but that, for it is my three sisters' sword!" (There were three sisters who owned it together.)

"Very well, you can sit there till the end of the world," said the man.

But when she heard that, she said he could have it if he would only set her free. So he took the sword

and went away with it, but left her sitting there all the same.

When they had gone far away, over naked mountains and wide woods, they came to a steep crag again. The travelling companion knocked on it and asked them to open it. As on the former occasion, it opened for them, and when they were far in the mountain, a troll woman came forward with a chair asking them to sit down, for they must be tired.

"Sit down yourself," said the companion, and so she did, just as her sister had done; she could not do anything else, and when she sat down on the chair she had to stop there. In the mountain the boy and the travelling companion walked about, and he opened all the wardrobes and chests of drawers till he found what he was looking for, which was a ball of gold thread. This he must have, and he promised the troll woman that if she would give it to him he would let her up from the chair. She said he could have all she owned, but she must not part with that, for it belonged to the three sisters. But when she heard that she would have to remain sitting till Doomsday if he did not get it, she said he might take it if he would set her free. The travelling companion took it, but he left her sitting there as she was.

Then they went away many days through woods and forests, till they came to another precipice,

when things happened just as in the other cases; the travelling companion knocked, the mountain opened, and a troll wife came with a chair and asked them to sit down, because they must be tired. But the man said, "Sit down yourself," and so she had to sit there. They had not gone through many rooms before he saw an old hat, that hung on a peg behind the door. He wanted to have it, but the woman would not part with it, as it belonged to the three sisters, and if she gave it away, she would be very unhappy. But when she heard that she would be left sitting till the world's end if he did not have it, she said he could take it if he only set her free. When the companion had possession of the hat he told her she might remain sitting where she was, like her sisters.

After going far and far they came to a creek. Then the travelling companion took the ball of gold thread and threw it so hard against the rock on the other side of the river that it bounced back again, and when he had thrown it a few times it became a bridge. They went over the creek on this, and when they got to the other side, the man told the boy to wrap the thread up again as fast as he could, "for if we don't do it soon the three troll women will come and tear us to bits," he said. The boy wound it up as fast as he could, and when there was not more left

than the last thread, the witches came rushing up. They flew at the water, so that the spray dashed before them, clutching at the end; but they were not able to catch hold of it, and so they were drowned in the creek.

When the pair had walked on some days longer the companion said:—

"Now we shall come to the castle soon where the princess you dreamt about lives, and when you come there you must go to the king and tell him what you dreamt, and what you are travelling for."

When they came there he did as he was told, and was pretty well received; he had a room for himself and his servant to live in, and when meal times came they were invited to dine at the king's own table.

As soon as he saw the princess, he knew her again at once, and saw that she was the one he had dreamt about, and whom he was to marry. He told the princess what errand he had come upon, and she answered that she liked him very well, and she would willingly have him, but he must first undergo three trials. When they had dined, she gave him a pair of gold scissors. "The first task is, that you shall take these, and keep them, and give them again to me to-morrow at dinner. It is not a very difficult trial, I am sure," she said smiling, "but if you cannot do it you will forfeit your life; that is the condition,

and you will be killed and laid on a stake, and your head stuck on a pole like the suitors whose skeletons you see outside the windows."

That was something of a difficulty, the boy thought. But the princess was so merry and boisterous, and romped so much with him, that he forgot the scissors, and himself too, and whilst they romped and tumbled she stole the scissors from him when he did not observe it.

When he went up to his room in the evening, and told how everything had gone, and what the princess said about the scissors she gave him to keep, the travelling companion said:—"You have got the scissors, then, that she gave you?"

He felt in all his pockets, but there were no scissors, and the boy was very much upset when he found that they were gone.

"Well, well, have patience; I will try and get them back again," said the companion, and he went down to the stable, where stood a great big stable-goat that belonged to the princess, and it was one that could fly many times faster through the air than it could run on land. So he took the three sisters' sword and struck the goat between the horns with it and said:—

"When does the princess ride to her sweetheart to-night?"

The Companion shows him the castle

The goat bleated, and said he dared not say, but when he got another stroke, he said that the princess would come at eleven o'clock.

The travelling companion put on the three sisters' hat and so became invisible, and then he waited for her. When she came she rubbed the goat over with an ointment from a large horn, and said:—

"*Through the air, through the air, over roofs and church spires, over land, over water, over hill, over valley, to my sweetheart who is waiting for me in the mountain to-night!*"

At the instant that the goat set off the travelling companion jumped up behind, and they went like the wind, so that they were not long on the way. By-and-by they came to a steep rock; here she knocked, and then they went into the mountain to the troll who was her sweetheart.

"A new suitor has arrived who wants to marry me, my friend; he is young and handsome, but I will have no other than thee," said the princess, caressing the troll. "I put him to his trial, and here are the scissors he should have kept and taken care of, so you keep them now!" she said.

Then they laughed heartily together as if they had got the boy on the stake and the wheel.

"Yes, I'll keep them and take care of them, and you will be my bride when the raven is picking the boy's bones," said the troll, putting the scissors into an iron box with three locks to it. But just as he put the scissors in the box the travelling companion took them out. No one could see him, for he had the three sisters' hat on, and so the troll locked the box on nothing, and he put the keys into a hole in his eye-tooth, and thought he, "He will have something to do to find them there."

When midnight came she travelled home again. The travelling companion sat behind her on the goat, and they were not long in getting home.

At mid-day the boy was asked down to the king's table, but the princess made such grimaces, and was so cross-grained and unpleasant, that she would scarcely look to the side where the boy sat; but when they had eaten she put on her best face again, and turning sulkingly to him said:

"Have you got the scissors safe that I asked you to keep yesterday?"

"Oh yes, I have them, here they are," said the boy, taking them and driving them into the table, so that it jumped again.

The princess could not have been wilder if he had thrown the scissors in her face, but she soon looked gentle and mild, and said:

"Since you have kept the scissors so well, it will not be difficult for you to keep my ball of gold thread, and you must take care that you give it me again to-morrow at dinner; for if you do not you will lose your life and be strung up; that is the condition," she said.

That was not so much of a task, thought the boy, and he stuck the gold ball in his pocket. But she began to joke and to romp with him again, so that he forgot both himself and the gold ball, and whilst they romped and tumbled about she stole it from him and then let him go.

When he came up to his room and told what they had said and done, the companion asked:

"Have you got the ball all right that she gave you?"

"Oh yes, I've got it," said the boy, groping in the pocket where he had put it; but no, he hadn't it, and he was so vexed that he did not know what to do with himself.

"Now, now, have patience," said the companion, "I must try and get hold of it for you."

So saying, he took the sword and the hat and went off to a blacksmith, and got a lot of iron put on the sword to weight it; and when he came to the stable he gave the goat a blow between the horns with it that felled it, and then he asked:

"When will the princess ride to her sweetheart to-night?"

"At twelve o'clock," bleated the goat.

The companion put the three sisters' hat on again, and waited till she came rushing in with the grease horn, and smeared the goat. And then she said as on the first time:

"*Through the air, through the air, over roofs and church spires, over land, over water, over hill, over valley, to my sweetheart who is waiting for me in the mountain to-night!*"

Just as they set off the travelling companion threw himself upon the back of the goat, and it went off like the wind. By-and-by they came to the troll's mountain, and after she had struck it three times, she went right in to the troll who was her sweetheart.

"How was it you did not keep the gold scissors I gave you yesterday, my friend?" said the princess. "That wooer of mine had them, and he gave them me again."

The troll said that was quite impossible, for he had them in a box with three locks, and had hidden the keys in a hole in one of his teeth; but when they opened the box and looked, the troll found no scissors.

Then the princess told him how she had given the suitor the gold ball.

"Here it is," she said, "for I took it from him again, when he did not notice it; but what shall we do with it now, since he's such a clever one?"

Well, the troll didn't quite know; but after thinking about it for a time, they settled that they would make up a big fire and burn it, and then they were certain he could not get it. But just as she threw it into the fire the companion stood ready and snatched it, and neither of them saw him, for he had the three sisters' hat on.

After the princess had been with the troll for a time, and morning drew near, she set off home again. The companion seated himself behind her on the goat, and away they went.

When the boy was called to dinner, the travelling companion gave him the ball. The princess was still more grumpy and cross than at dinner the day before, and when they had eaten, she pursed up her mouth and said:

"I suppose I shall not be fortunate enough to get my gold ball again that I asked you to take care of yesterday?"

"Yes," said the boy, "you shall have it; here it is," and he thumped it on to the table so that the table

jumped so much that the king bounced right up into the air.

The princess became as pale as a ghost, but she recovered herself and said that it was well done; she had only one little task more for him. "As you are so clever, you must fetch me what I am thinking about for dinner to-morrow; and then you shall have me and keep me."

The boy felt like one condemned to death, for he thought it was not possible to know what she was thinking about, and it was still more impossible to procure it, and when he went back to his room he could scarcely contain himself. The companion told him to keep quiet, he should no doubt find a way out of the difficulty, just as he had done on both the other occasions, so the boy became calm at last, and lay down to sleep. Then the companion went to the smith, and got still more weight added to the sword, and when it was done he went to the stable, and struck the goat between the horns, so that it tumbled from one wall to the other.

"When will the princess go to see her sweetheart to-night?" he said.

"At one o'clock," bleated the goat.

When it came near the time, the travelling companion was in the stable with the three sisters' hat on, and when the princess had smeared the goat, and

said, as she had done before, that they must be off through the air to her sweetheart, who was waiting for her in the mountain, they sped away again, with the companion sitting behind; but he was not so light-handed this time, for by-and-by he gave the princess a bang here and there, so that he nearly upset her. When they came to the mountain-wall she knocked at it, it opened, and they went in through the mountain to her sweetheart. But when she came to him she was very angry. She said she didn't know how it was the weather was so bad; and she thought there must be some one with her hitting her and the goat, for she was certain she was both black and blue all over her body, so badly had she fared on the way. Then she told how her wooer had produced the gold ball too, but how it came about neither she nor the troll could make out.

"But do you know what I have set him to do now?" she said.

No, the troll did not know.

"Why," she answered, "I have told him that he must fetch me the thing I was thinking about by dinner-time to-morrow; and I thought about your head. Do you think he can fetch that my friend?" said the princess, cuddling up to the troll.

"No, I don't think so," said the troll, "I will take my oath about that."

Then he laughed and gobbled worse than a gander, and both the troll and the princess thought the boy would come to the stake and the wheel and that the ravens would pick his eyes out before he would fetch the troll's head.

When morning drew near she was afraid to go home, for she thought there was some one after her, and she dared not travel alone; the troll really must accompany her on the way. So he said he would do so, and he brought out his goat, for he had one which was just like the princess's; and he smeared it and rubbed it well between the horns as she had done. When the troll had mounted the goat, the companion hung on behind him, and off they went through the air to the king's palace; but on the way the companion beat both the troll and the goat, giving them stroke after stroke, and blow after blow with his sword, so that they sank lower and lower; and at last they nearly sank into the sea that they were crossing over. When the troll saw how very badly things were turning out, he followed the princess all the way home to the palace so that he might see that she got safely home; but the moment she shut the door after her the companion chopped the troll's head off, and went off with it to the boy's bedroom.

"Here is what the princess thought of," said he.

That was a great thing to do, anyone will agree;

and when the boy was invited down to dinner next day the princess was as blithe as a lark.

"Perhaps you have got what I thought about," she said.

"Yes, I have it here," said the boy, drawing it from under the skirt of his coat, and he flung it on the table, so that the table and all the things turned topsy-turvy. The princess looked as white as a ghost, but she could not deny that that was what she had thought about; so now he might have her, as she had promised.

So the betrothal was celebrated, and there was great rejoicing over the whole kingdom. But the companion took the boy aside, and told him that he must shut his eyes, and only pretend to be asleep on the wedding-night, and if he held his life dear he must obey him; he must not have a wink of sleep until he had stript her of the troll's skin she had on; he must beat that from her with a rod made of nine fresh-cut birch twigs, and must scrub it off her in three big bowls of milk; first he was to scour her in a bowl of last year's whey; then he must rub her in sour milk; and then he must swill her in a mug of sweet milk; the twigs were under the bed, and the bowls were lying in the corner. Everything, in fact, was ready for him.

So the boy promised to obey him, and to do just

as he said; and when they came into the chamber in the evening the boy lay down as if to sleep. Then the princess raised herself on her elbow and looked at him to see if he was asleep, and tickled him under the nose; he seemed to be fast asleep, so she pulled him by the hair and the beard. But he appeared to sleep like a log. Then she drew a great slaughtering knife from under the pillow, and was just going to cut his head off, when the boy sprang up, hurled the knife from her hand, and seized her by the hair. Then he beat her with the rods until there was not a bit of them left. When that was done, he put her into the bowl of whey, and then he saw what sort of a creature she was; she was as black as a raven all over her body; but when he had scrubbed her in the whey, and scoured her in the sour milk, the troll skin was all cleared from her, and she was more gentle and beautiful than she had ever been before.

The next day the travelling companion said they must go. The boy was ready, and the princess too. Their wedding presents had for some time been ready. In the night the companion brought all the gold and silver and costly things from the troll's home in the mountain to the palace; and when they were ready to start in the morning the whole palace was so crammed full that they could hardly get out. The wedding presents now were worth more than the

king's whole land and riches, and they did not know how they could possibly carry them away. But the companion knew how to manage things. There were still six more goats at the troll's that could fly through the air, and these they loaded and piled up so with gold and silver that they could only walk over the fields, and could not fly at all, and all that the goats were not able to carry away they had to leave behind in the palace.

So they travelled far and farther than far, till at last the goats were so tired and done-up that they could not go on any longer. The boy and the princess did not know what to do, but when the travelling companion saw that they could not go on he took the whole treasure on his back, laid the goats on the top, and carried the whole lot until they were only a little more than four miles from where the boy lived.

Then the companion said:—"Now I must part from you; I cannot remain with you any longer."

But the boy would not have it so, he could not bear to lose him on any account. So the companion went with him two miles farther, but beyond that he would not go; and when the boy begged and beseeched him to return with him home and stay with him, or at the very least to go and drink the "welcome home" at his father's, the travelling companion said:—No, he

could not do that. So then the boy asked what he could do for him to repay his help and his kindness.

"If I must have something, let it be half of what you may have in five years," said the companion.

"With all my heart," said the boy, "it shall be so."

When he had left, the boy piled all his wealth together there and went empty-handed home. And they kept up the welcome-home festivities until the rejoicing was heard of and spoken about over seven kingdoms; and when they had finished it, they worked all the winter through, both with the goats and with the twelve horses his father had, before they carried home all the gold and silver.

When the five years were past, the travelling companion came back again to claim his share, and he found that the man had divided everything into two equal parts.

"But," said he, "there is one thing that you have not divided."

"What is that?" said the man, "I thought I had divided everything."

"There has been a child born to you," said the companion, "you must divide that, too."

That, indeed, was true. So he took his sword, and just as he raised it to cleave the child, the travelling companion seized the point from behind, so that he could not strike.

"Now, are you not glad that I have not let you strike," said he.

"Yes, indeed, I have never been so glad," said the man.

"Well, just so glad was I when you took me out of the lump of ice. Keep everything yourself, I want nothing, for I am a spirit."

He was the vintner who lay in the lump of ice outside the church door, and that every one spat upon; and because the boy had given all he had to give him peace and Christian burial, he had been the humble follower who had helped him. He had had leave to follow him for a year; that time expired when they parted the last time, and he had obtained permission to see him once more; but now they must separate for ever, for the chimes of heaven were ringing for him.

THE PINKS

NCE upon a time there was a poor labourer who knowing he was about to die, wished to leave nothing behind him that his son and daughter could quarrel about after his death, for he loved them tenderly. "Your mother brought me for a dowry," he said, "two stools and a straw mattress. These, with my hen, would have been my only belongings, had not a pot of pinks and a silver ring been given me by a great lady who lived for some time in my poor cottage. When she went away, she said to me: 'My good man, here is a present for you. Be careful to water the pinks, and to keep the ring in a safe place. I may also tell you that your daughter will be wonderfully beautiful. Call her Fortunée; and give her the ring and the pinks to comfort her for being so poor.' So, dear Fortunée," the good man went on, "you shall have both these, and the rest of my belongings I leave to your brother."

The labourer's two children appeared to be satisfied.

Their father died, and they wept, and afterwards they shared his belongings without any dispute. Fortunée thought her brother loved her, but once when she was about to sit down on one of the stools, he said to her in an angry tone: "You keep your pinks and your ring, but don't meddle with my stool. I like order in my house." Fortunée, who was very gentle, began to cry quietly, and remained standing, while Bedou (that was the brother's name) sat there as fine as if he had been a learned doctor. Supper time came on; Bedou had a beautiful, fresh egg which his only hen had laid, and he threw the shell towards his sister, saying: "See, I have nothing else to give you; if that isn't enough, go and hunt for frogs; there are plenty in the marsh near by." Fortunée answered nothing, but lifting her eyes to heaven she wept again; then she went to her own room. She found it filled with a delicious scent, which she knew, of course, must be from her pinks. She went up to them, saying, in a sad voice: "Pretty pinks, with all your different colours so fair to see, how you comfort my sad heart by your sweet scent. Never fear that I shall let you want for water, or with cruel hand wrench you from your stalks. I shall take care of you, for you are all I have in the world." Then she looked to see if they wanted watering. They were very dry, so she took the

pitcher and ran out in the moonlight to the stream some little way off. As she had walked very fast, she sat down on the bank to rest, but hardly had she done so before she saw a lady, whose majestic air beseemed the large number of attendants who accompanied her. Six maids-of-honour held up the train of her robe, while she leaned on two others. Her guards marched before her, richly clad in amaranth velvet embroidered with pearls. They carried an armchair spread with cloth of gold, on which she presently sat down, and a portable canopy was quickly set up over her head. At the same time there were others spreading a table all covered with golden vessels and crystal vases. An excellent supper was served on the banks of the stream, and the soft murmur of the water seemed to blend with the different voices that were singing these words:

"Soft and low the summer air
Gently stirs the woodlands there;
Bright flowers glittering on the sod
Mark where Flora's feet have trod;
'Neath the cool shades hear the choirs
Of birds that sing their soft desires;
Would you catch the soft notes too?
Lovers plenty wait for you."

Fortunée hid in a little corner, not daring to move, so surprised was she with all that was happening.

After a moment the Queen said to one of her squires: "It seems to me that I see a shepherdess near that bush. Bring her here." So Fortunée came forward; and though she was naturally very timid, she did not fail to make a deep bow to the Queen, and she did it with so much grace that those who saw her were much astonished. Taking the hem of the Queen's robe in her hand she kissed it, and then stood before her with her eyes cast down, the pink blush on her cheek showing up the whiteness of her complexion. Altogether you could not fail to see in her manners that air of mild simplicity that is so charming in young people. "What are you doing here?" the Queen asked her. "Are you not afraid of robbers?" "Alas! madam," said Fortunée, "I have only a cotton frock; so what good would it do them to rob a poor shepherdess like me?" "You are not rich then?" replied the Queen, smiling. "I am so poor," said Fortunée, "that my whole inheritance from my father is a pot of pinks and a silver ring." "But you have a heart," added the Queen. "If some one wished to take it from you, would you give it away?" "I do not know what it means to give away my heart, madam," she replied. "I have always heard that without one's heart one cannot live; that when it is wounded one must die, and in spite of my poverty I am not sorry to live." "You will always be right,

my pretty girl, to defend your heart. But tell me," the Queen went on, "did you have a good supper this evening?" "No, madam," said Fortunée, "my brother ate up everything." The Queen ordered them to lay a place for her, and setting her down at the table, she gave her all the best things on it. "I would like very much to know," said the Queen, "what you were doing so late at the stream." "Madam," she answered, "there is my pitcher; I was fetching water to water my pinks." So saying she bent down to take hold of the pitcher which was near her; but when she showed it to the Queen she was much astonished to find it turned into a golden one, all covered with diamonds and filled with deliciously-scented water. "I give it to you, Fortunée," said the Queen. "Go and water the flowers which you take such good care of, and do not forget that the Queen of the Woods means to be a friend to you." At these words the shepherdess threw herself at her feet. "After giving you my very humble thanks, madam," she said, "for the honour you do me, I make so bold as to ask you to wait here a moment. I am going to fetch you the half of what belongs to me, my pot of pinks. It can never be in better hands than yours." "Very well, Fortunée," said the Queen, gently stroking her cheeks. "I will remain here till you return."

Fortunée took her golden pitcher, and ran to her

little room; but while she had been away her brother Bedou had gone in, taken away her pot of pinks, and put a big cabbage in its place. When Fortunée saw this miserable cabbage she was in despair, and hesitated whether she should go back to the stream or not. At last she made up her mind to do so, and kneeling down before the Queen she said: "Madam, Bedou has stolen my pot of pinks; I have only my ring left, and I beg you to take it as a proof of my gratitude." "If I take your ring, pretty shepherdess," said the Queen, "you will be ruined." "Ah! madam," she answered, with a pretty air of grace, "if I have your favour I cannot be ruined." The Queen took Fortunée's ring and put it on her finger. Then she got into her chariot of coral, decked with emeralds, which was drawn by six white horses. Fortunée followed her with her eyes as long as she could, till the turns in the forest roads hid her from her sight. Then she went back to Bedou, her mind full of this adventure.

The first thing she did on entering her room was to throw the cabbage out of the window. But she was much astonished to hear a voice crying: "Ah! you have killed me!" She could not understand what these cries could mean, for cabbages are not in the habit of talking. As soon as it was day, Fortunée, anxious about her pot of pinks, went outside to look for it, and the first thing she found was the miserable

cabbage. Giving it a kick, she said: "What are you doing here? Do you think you do as well in my room as my pinks?" "If I had not been put there," replied the cabbage, "I should never have thought of intruding." Fortunée trembled, for she was very much afraid. But the cabbage spoke once more. "If you will only put me back amongst my kind, I will tell you in two words that your pinks are in Bedou's bed." Fortunée was kind enough to plant the cabbage, and then taking up her brother's favourite hen, she said: "Naughty creature! I shall make you pay for all the trouble that Bedou gives me." "Ah! shepherdess," said the hen, "let me live, and as I am of a very talkative humour, I shall tell you the most interesting things. Do not think that you are the daughter of the labourer in whose house you have grown up. No, fair Fortunée, he was not your father. But the Queen who gave you life had already had six daughters, and her husband and father-in-law told her they would stab her if she did not give them an heir. The poor Queen, in great distress, was about to have another child. They shut her up in a castle, surrounded her with guards, or rather executioners, who were ordered to kill her if she bore another daughter. The Princess, terrified at the danger that threatened her, neither ate nor slept. But she had a sister who was a fairy, and she wrote to tell her of her

fears. The fairy, too, was to bear a child, who she knew would be a son. When he was born, therefore, she packed her son comfortably in a basket, which she gave in charge to the winds, telling them to carry the little prince into the Queen's room, and exchange him for the daughter whom she would bear. This plan was, however, of no use, for the Queen, not receiving news from her sister the fairy, took advantage of the good nature of one of her guards, who pitied her and let her escape by a cord ladder. As soon as you were born, the poor Queen, seeking a hiding-place, came to this hut half dead with fatigue and pain. I was an industrious woman," said the hen, " and a good nurse, so she gave you in charge to me, telling me all her sorrows, with which she was so overcome that she died before she had time to tell us what should be done with you. As I have been very fond of talking all my life, I could not keep from telling this adventure. So one day there came here a beautiful lady, to whom I related everything I knew about it. She touched me immediately with her wand, and I was turned into a hen, and never could speak any more. My grief was terrible, and my husband, who was from home when the change occurred, never knew the truth. When he came back he looked for me everywhere, till at last he thought I was drowned, or that the beasts of the forest had devoured me. The same lady who had done

me such a wrong passed by here a second time; she ordered him to call you Fortunée, and made him a present of a pot of pinks and a silver ring. But while she was in the hut, there came five-and-twenty of your royal father's guards, who were seeking you with evil intentions. She muttered some words, and they were all turned into green cabbages, one of which it was you threw out of the window last night. I had never heard him speak till now. I myself could not speak either, and I know not how my voice has come back to me."

The Princess was very much astonished at the wonders which the hen told her of. She felt stirred with pity for her, and said: "I am deeply sorry, my poor nurse, that you were turned into a hen. I should very much like to give you back your former shape if I could. But despair of nothing. It seems to me that all the things you have just told me about cannot always remain as they are now. Meanwhile I am going to look for my pinks, for I love them better than anything else."

Bedou had gone to the wood, never imagining that Fortunée would think of rummaging in his bed. She was delighted that he was from home, and was hoping she would find no difficulty, when all at once she saw a great quantity of enormous rats ready for fight. They were drawn up in battalions, with the bed in

question behind them, and the stools by their sides. Some large mice formed a reserve force, bent on fighting like Amazons. Fortunée was much surprised, and dared not go nearer, for the rats were attacking her, biting her, and making the blood flow. "What!" she cried, "my pinks, my dear pinks, will you remain in such bad company?" All at once the thought struck her that perhaps the perfumed water which she kept in the golden pitcher might have some special virtue, so she ran to fetch it, and threw some drops of it on the host of rats and mice. In a moment the rabble scampered off, each one to his hole, while the princess bore away her beautiful pinks in haste. They were nearly dead, so much in want of water were they, and she poured on them all she had in her golden pitcher. She was smelling them with great delight when she heard a very sweet voice which came from amongst the leaves and which said: "Wonderful Fortunée! behold the happy days so longed for, when I may declare my feelings to you; for the power of your beauty is such, that even flowers are conscious of it." The princess trembling and astonished at having heard a cabbage and a hen talk, and now a pot of pinks, and at having seen an army of rats, turned pale and fainted.

At that moment Bedou arrived. His work and the heat of the sun had so excited him, that when he saw

that Fortunée had come to seek for her pinks, and had found them, he dragged her to the door and put her out. Hardly had her cheeks touched the cool earth before she opened her beautiful eyes, and saw standing by her the Queen of the Woods, ever charming and dignified. "You have a wicked brother," she said to Fortunée, "I saw how cruelly he threw you out here. Do you wish to be revenged on him?" "No, madam," she said, "I do not know what anger is, and his evil nature cannot change mine." "But," said the Queen, "I have a strong conviction that this coarse labourer is not your brother; what do you think?" "All the facts that I am aware of go to prove that he is, madam," replied the shepherdess, modestly, "and I must believe them." "What!" said the Queen, "have you not heard that you were born a Princess?" "I have just heard it," she answered; "yet dare I venture to boast of a thing of which I have no proof?" "Ah, dear child," said the Queen, "how I like to see you in this humour! I know now that the obscure bringing up you have had has not stifled the noble blood in your veins. Yes, you are a Princess, and it has not been in my power to save you from the misfortunes which you have experienced up till now."

Here she was interrupted by the arrival of a young man, who was fairer than the day. He was dressed

in a long doublet of green and gold silk, fastened with large buttons of emeralds and rubies and diamonds. On his head was a crown of pinks, and his hair hung down over his shoulders. As soon as he saw the Queen, he bent one knee to the ground and greeted her respectfully. "Ah! dear Pink," she said, "the unhappy term of your enchantment has come to an end by the help of fair Fortunée. What joy to see you!" And she clasped him close in her arms, and then turning towards the shepherdess she said: "Fair Princess, I know all that the hen has told you; but what you do not know is, that the zephyrs, whom I had ordered to exchange my son for you, carried him to a flower-bed while they were searching for your mother, who was my sister. Meanwhile a fairy who knew the most secret things, and with whom I had long been on bad terms, so cleverly seized the opportunity she had been on the watch for ever since the birth of my son, that she changed him on the spot into a pot of pinks, and for all my skill I could not prevent this misfortune. Stung with grief, I used all my art to find a remedy, and I could think of nothing better than to bring Prince Pink to the place where you were being brought up, guessing that when you would have watered the flowers with the delicious water which I had in the golden vase, he would speak, he would love you, and that after that nothing would disturb your peace. I

had even in my possession the silver ring which it was necessary for me to receive from your hand, as a sign that the hour was at hand when the charm should lose its force, in spite of the rats and the mice that our enemy sent out to hinder you from touching the pinks. So, dear Fortunée, if my son marries you with this ring, your happiness will never end. Look now if the Prince seems to you handsome enough to take him for a husband." "Madam," she replied, blushing, "you heap favours on me. I know that you are my aunt, that by your skill the guards sent to kill me were turned into cabbages, and my nurse into a hen. In proposing to marry me to Prince Pink, you do me more honour than I deserve. But, may I tell you why I hesitate? I do not know what his feelings are for me, and I begin to feel for the first time in my life that I would not be satisfied if he did not love me." "Have no doubts on that point, fair princess," said Pink; "for long you have impressed me as you wish to impress me now, and if I had been able to speak, what should I not have told you every day as to how my affection was growing, burning within me?"

The Princess seemed very pleased with Pink's gallantry, and praised highly the verses he had made on the spot, and though she was not used to hearing verses, she spoke of them like a person of good taste. The Queen, who was impatient at seeing her still

dressed as a shepherdess, touched her with her wand, and wished for her the richest dresses that ever were seen. At the word her white cotton frock changed into silver brocade embroidered with carbuncles. From her hair, which was piled high on her head, a long veil of gauze and gold fell down. Her black hair sparkled with diamonds, and her complexion, which had been of dazzling whiteness, became like blooming roses, till the prince could hardly bear to look on its brilliancy. "Ah! Fortunée, how beautiful and charming you are!" cried he, with a sigh. "Will you not comfort me in my distress?" "Nay, my son," said the Queen, "your cousin will not resist our prayers."

While she was speaking, Bedou passed by on his way to work, and seeing Fortunée like a goddess, he thought he must be dreaming. She called him in a kindly voice, and begged the Queen to have pity on him. "What! after having ill-treated you so?" she said. "Ah, madam," replied the princess, "I am incapable of revenge." The Queen kissed her, praising her generous feelings. "To please you," she added, "I am going to make the ungrateful Bedou rich." Thereupon his hut became a palace, beautifully furnished and full of money. But his stools did not change, neither did his bed, to remind him of his former state. And the Queen of the Woods sharp-

ened his wits, softened his manners, and changed his face. Then Bedou felt capable of gratitude, and poured out his thanks to the Queen and the Princess.

Afterwards by a touch of her wand, the cabbages became men, and the hen a woman. Only Prince Pink was dissatisfied, and sighed as he stood by his Princess, begging her to look more kindly upon him. At last she consented. She had never seen a handsome Prince before, and the handsomest was as nothing to this one. The Queen of the Woods, delighted by so happy a marriage, took every pains to make all the arrangements as sumptuous as possible. The merrymaking went on for several years, and the happiness of this loving couple lasted their whole life long.

THE PRINCESS IN DISGUISE

A KING once had a wife with golden hair, who was so beautiful that none on earth could be found equal to her. It happened that she fell ill, and as soon as she knew she must die, she sent for the king, and said to him, "After my death, I know you will marry another wife; but you must promise me that, however beautiful she may be, if she is not as beautiful as I am, and has not golden hair like mine, you will not marry her."

The king had no sooner given his promise than she closed her eyes and died.

For a long time he refused to be comforted, and thought it was impossible he could ever take another wife. At length his counsellors came to him, and said, "A king should not remain unmarried; we ought to have a queen."

So he at last consented, and then messengers were sent far and wide, to find a bride whose beauty should equal that of the dead queen. But none was to be

found in the whole world; for, even when equally beautiful, they had not golden hair.

So the messengers returned without obtaining what they sought.

Now, the king had a daughter who was quite as beautiful as her dead mother, and had also golden hair. She had all this while been growing up, and very soon the king noticed how exactly she resembled her dead mother. So he sent for his counsellors, and said to them, "I will marry my daughter; she is the image of my dead wife, and no other bride can be found to enable me to keep my promise to her."

When the counsellors heard this, they were dreadfully shocked, and said, "It is forbidden for a father to marry his daughter; nothing but evil could spring from such a sin, and the kingdom will be ruined."

The king's daughter was still more frightened at her father's proposition, but she hoped to dissuade him from carrying out his intention, so she said to him, "Before I consent to your wish, I shall require three things—a dress as golden as the sun, another as silvery as the moon, and a third as glittering as the stars; and besides this, I shall require a mantle made of a thousand skins of rough furs sewn together, and every animal in the kingdom must give a piece of his skin towards it."

"Ah," she thought, "I have asked for impossibili-

ties, and I hope I shall be able to make my father give up his wicked intentions."

The king, however, was not to be diverted from his purpose. All the most skilful young women in the kingdom were employed to weave the three dresses—one to be as golden as the sun, another as silvery as the moon, and the third as glittering as the stars. He sent hunters into the forest to kill the wild animals, and bring home their skins, of which the mantle was to be made, and at last, when all was finished, he brought them and laid them before her, and then said: "To-morrow our marriage shall take place."

Then the king's daughter saw that there was no hope of changing her father's heart, so she determined to run away from the castle.

In the night, when everyone slept, she rose and took from her jewel-case a gold ring, a gold spinning-wheel, and a golden hook. The three dresses of the sun, moon, and stars she folded in so small a parcel that they were placed in a walnutshell; then she put on the fur mantle, stained her face and hands black with walnut juice, and committing herself to the care of heaven, she left her home, and travelled the whole night until she came at last to a large forest, and feeling very tired, she crept into a hollow tree and went to sleep. The sun rose, but she still slept on, and did not wake till nearly noon.

It happened on this very day that the king to whom the wood belonged was hunting in the forest, and when his hounds came to the tree, they sniffed about, and ran round and round the tree, barking loudly. The king called to his hunters and said: "Just go and see what animal the dogs are barking at."

They obeyed, and, quickly returning, told the king that in the hollow tree was a most wonderful creature, such as they had never seen before, that the skin was covered with a thousand different sorts of fur, and that it was fast asleep.

"Then," said the king, "go and see if you can capture it alive, then bind it on the waggon, and bring it home."

While the hunters were binding the maiden, she awoke, and, full of terror, cried out to them: "I am only a poor child, forsaken by my father and mother; take pity on me, and take me with you."

"Well," they replied, "you may be useful to the cook, little Roughskin. Come with us; you can at least sweep up the ashes."

So they seated her on the waggon, and took her home to the king's castle. They showed her a little stable under the steps, where no daylight ever came, and said: "Roughskin, here you can live and sleep." So the king's daughter was sent into the kitchen to fetch

The princess in the forest

the wood, draw the water, stir the fire, pluck the fowls, look after the vegetables, sweep the ashes, and do all the hard work.

Poor Roughskin, as they called her, lived for a long time most miserably, and the beautiful king's daughter knew not when it would end or how. It happened, however, after a time that a festival was to take place in the castle, so she said to the cook: "May I go out for a little while to see the company arrive? I will stand outside the door."

"Yes, you may go," he replied; "but in half an hour I shall want you to sweep up the ashes, and put the kitchen in order."

Then she took her little oil lamp, went into the stable, threw off the fur coat, and washed the nut stains from her face and hands, so that her full beauty appeared before the day. After this she opened the nutshell and took out the dress that was golden as the sun, and put it on. As soon as she was quite dressed, she went out and presented herself at the entrance of the castle as a visitor. No one recognised her as Roughskin; they thought she was a king's daughter. The king went to receive her, offered her his hand, and while they danced together he thought in his heart, "My eyes have never seen any maiden before so beautiful as this."

As soon as the dance was over she bowed to the king,

and before he could look round she had vanished, no one knew where. The sentinel at the castle gate was called and questioned, but he had not seen any one pass.

But she had run to her stable, quickly removed her dress, stained her face and hands, put on her fur coat, and was again Roughskin. When she entered the kitchen and began to do her work and sweep up the ashes, the cook said: "Leave that alone till to-morrow; I want you to cook some soup for the king, for I wish to go upstairs and take a look; but do not let one of your hairs fall in, or you will get nothing to eat in future from me."

Then the cook went out, and Roughskin made the king's soup as nicely as she could, and cut bread for it, and when it was ready, she fetched from her little stable her gold ring, and laid it in the dish in which the soup was prepared.

After the king had left the ball-room, he called for the soup, and while eating it, thought he had never tasted better soup in his life. But when the dish was nearly empty, he saw to his surprise a gold ring lying at the bottom, and could not imagine how it came there. Then he ordered the cook to come to him, and he was in a fright when he heard the order: "You must certainly have let a hair fall into the soup; if you have, I shall thrash you," he said.

As soon as he appeared, the king said: "Who cooked this soup?"

"I cooked it," he replied.

"That is not true," said the king; "this soup is made quite differently and much better than you ever made it."

Then the cook was obliged to confess that Roughskin had made the soup.

"Go and send her to me," said the king.

As soon as she appeared, the king said to her, "Who art thou, maiden?"

She replied, "I am a poor child without father or mother."

He asked again, "Why are you in my castle?"

"Because I am trying to earn my bread by helping the cook," she replied.

"How came this ring in the soup?" he said again.

"I know nothing about the ring," she replied.

When the king found he could learn nothing from Roughskin he sent her away. A little time after this there was another festival, and Roughskin had again permission from the cook to go and see the visitors; "but," he added, "come back in half an hour and cook for the king the soup that he is so fond of."

She promised to return, and ran quickly into her little stable, washed off the stains, and took out of the nutshell her dress, silvery as the moon, and put it on.

Then she appeared at the castle like a king's daughter, and the king came to receive her with great pleasure, he was so glad to see her again, and while the dancing continued the king kept her as his partner. When the ball ended she disappeared so quickly that the king could not imagine what had become of her. But she had rushed down to her stable, made herself again the rough little creature that was called Roughskin, and went into the kitchen to cook the soup.

While the cook was upstairs she fetched the golden spinning-wheel and dropped it into the soup as soon as it was ready. The king again ate it with great relish; it was as good as before, and when he sent for the cook and asked who made it, he was obliged to own that it was Roughskin. She was also ordered to appear before the king, but he could get nothing out of her, excepting that she was a poor child, and knew nothing of the golden spinning-wheel.

At the king's third festival everything happened as before. But the cook said: "I will let you go and see the dancing-room this time, Roughskin, but I believe you are a witch, for although the soup is good, and the king says it is better than I can make it, there is always something dropped into it which I cannot understand." Roughskin did not stop to listen; she ran quickly to her little stable, washed off the nut-

stains, and this time dressed herself in the dress that glittered like the stars. When the king came as before to receive her in the hall, he thought he had never seen such a beautiful woman in his life. While they were dancing, he contrived, without being noticed by the maiden, to slip a gold ring on her finger, and he had given orders that the dancing should continue longer than usual. When it ended, he wanted to hold her hand still, but she pulled it away, and sprang so quickly among the people that she vanished from his eyes.

She ran out of breath to her stable under the steps, for she knew that she had remained longer away than half an hour, and there was not time to take off her dress, so she threw on her fur cloak over it, and in her haste she did not make her face black enough, nor hide her golden hair properly; her hands also remained white. However, when she entered the kitchen the cook was still away, so she prepared the king's soup, and dropped into it the golden hook.

The king, when he found another trinket in his soup, sent immediately for Roughskin, and as she entered the room he saw the ring on her white finger which he had placed there. Instantly he seized her hand and held her fast, but in her struggles to get free the fur mantle opened and the star-glittering dress was plainly seen. The king caught the mantle and tore

it off, and as he did so her golden hair fell over her shoulders, and she stood before him in her full splendour, and felt that she could no longer conceal who she was. Then she wiped the soot and stains from her face, and was beautiful to the eyes of the king as any woman upon earth.

"You shall be my dear bride," said the king, "and we will never be parted again, although I know not who you are."

Then the marriage was celebrated, and they lived happily till their death.

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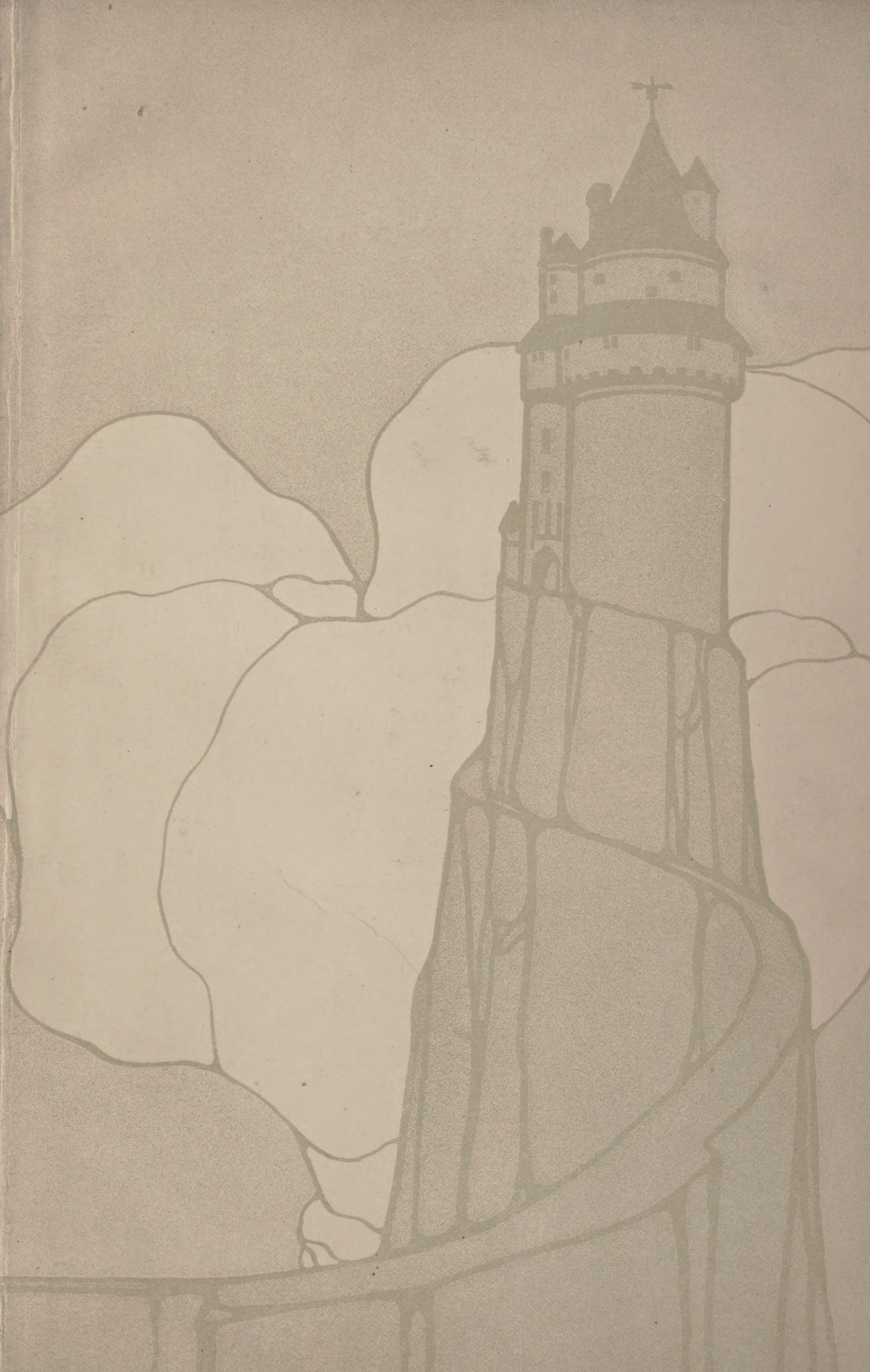

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